



Environmental Excellence Awards



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

INTRODUCTION

Since 1995, the Environmental Excellence Awards have recognized leaders across the country who make outstanding contributions to environmental stewardship and partnerships above and beyond traditional transportation project outcomes. The winning projects and programs exemplify FHWA's priorities of climate change and sustainability, equity and environmental justice, complete streets, economic strength, and safety for all road users. The 2022 awards were coordinated with FHWA's Offices of Human Environment, Natural Environment, and Project Development and Environmental Review to reflect the notion that "environment" means a connection to both human and environmental systems.

Chosen from over 70 entries, this year's 14 award winners reflect the tremendous diversity of our Nation with recipients from 16 states and every region of the country. Together, the awardees demonstrate how innovation, collaboration, and a dedication to environmental stewardship can help meet our Nation's growing transportation needs.

Thank you and congratulations to our 2022 awardees!



DOT is committed to ensuring that information is available in appropriate alternative formats to meet the requirements of persons who have a disability. If you require an alternative version of this document, please contact Zoe.McAlear@dot.gov.

JUDGES

Heather Goss

Environmental Protection Agency



Heather Goss has served as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) National Transportation Liaison to the Federal Highway Administration since 2020. Transportation liaisons help facilitate the environmental and permitting review process for transportation projects by

providing technical assistance and coordinating the response of resource and regulatory agencies to State DOTs. Liaisons help to improve communication and coordination among State DOTs and resource and regulatory agencies, facilitate environmental protection while streamlining review processes, and increase access to environmental and regulatory expertise for State DOTs. EPA's National Transportation Liaison position is housed within the Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) stormwater program, so Heather focuses on transportation stormwater issues. She is particularly interested in source control, emerging contaminants, off-site stormwater management, and green infrastructure. Heather has worked at EPA headquarters since 2006, mostly in the realm of water quality standards and the nexus of NPDES permits and water quality standards. She has also completed a detail assignment in the EPA Region 9 (San Francisco) office's NPDES and Total Maximum Daily Load programs. Heather holds bachelor's and master's degrees in earth sciences.

Jacky Grimshaw

Center for Neighborhood Technology



Jacky Grimshaw joined the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) in 1992 and has since developed its capacity to engage in public policy advocacy, transportation research, public participation tool development, GIS mapping, and community economic development. Jacky

created and led CNT's transportation and air quality programs for over a decade and currently co-leads the Transportation Equity Network, a coalition of community-based and civic organizations and representatives from academic institutions with a focus on working with decision-makers to embed racial equity and mobility justice into transportation via community-driven decisions and investments. She is a founding member of Elevated Chicago, a collaborative which presents community-

led solutions to neighborhood displacement and inequities using an underutilized asset: our public transit system. She also led CNT's Transit Future campaign in the fight for mass transit reform in the Chicago region in 2008. The Transit Future campaign sought to have the Cook County Board identify a dedicated revenue stream to expand transit in Cook County. Since 2005, she has led CNT's policy efforts at all levels of government. Jacky served on numerous boards, including the National Academy of Sciences' Transportation Research Board's Standing Committee on Equity in Transportation and Standing Committee on Public Engagement and Communication, and is a Friend of the Standing Committee of Women and Gender in Transportation after completing terms as a member. She has completed terms on the Chicago Transit Authority and EPA's Mobile Sources Technical Review Subcommittee of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

Marlys Osterhues

Federal Railroad Administration



Marlys Osterhues is Chief of the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) Environment and Project Engineering Division. As the Chief, she oversees FRA's complex portfolio of environmental reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act for FRA grant programs and actions. Marlys is responsible

for ensuring that environmental policy and compliance obligations are satisfied in the planning, developing, and implementing of intercity passenger and freight rail programs. She leads FRA's development of environmental policy and implementation of a wide range of initiatives to improve and accelerate environmental review and historic preservation processes. Prior to joining FRA, Marlys worked in FHWA's Office of Project Development and Environmental Review for 15 years. Marlys served as a Mitigation Team Leader from 2010-2016 where she was responsible for the development of FHWA policies and program support related to natural and cultural resource protection and consideration of ecological impacts in the transportation decision-making process. Marlys oversaw program, research, and interagency coordination activities related to water quality, historic preservation, stormwater, wetlands, wildlife, endangered species, and vegetation management. She graduated from the University of California at Santa Barbara with a degree in environmental studies.

JUDGES

Traceé Strum-Gilliam, AICP

PRR, Inc.



Traceé Strum-Gilliam is a national expert in environmental justice analysis and outreach, with more than 25 years of experience in environmental engineering and planning projects. She is currently a Senior Director at PRR where she is responsible for the East Coast Transportation Practice and

serves as the firm's environmental justice practice lead. As a public involvement practitioner focused on grassroots outreach and consensus building, Traceé manages public involvement programs and conducts Title VI analysis, including the development of outreach programs to reach limited-English proficient populations. She offers technical expertise in community impact assessment and conducts peer reviews for complex projects. Traceé led the public involvement program and environmental justice analysis task for the I-95 Access Improvements Study to support the \$5.5 billion Port Covington Redevelopment Project. She is a member of Women's Transportation Seminar and involved in Transportation Research Board Committees: Equity in Transportation (AME10) co-chair, Community Resources and Impacts (AME80) member. Ms. Strum-Gilliam began her career at the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration in 1996. She has a BS in Civil Engineering from Morgan State University, a master's degree in Environmental Planning and Management from Johns Hopkins University, and is a certified planner as designated by the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Kathryn Zyla

Georgetown Climate Center



Kathryn Zyla is the Executive Director of the Georgetown Climate Center, where she oversees the Center's work at the nexus of climate and energy policy, supervising staff and student work on climate mitigation and adaptation at the State and Federal level. She is also a senior lecturer at

Georgetown University Law Center and faculty advisor for the student Georgetown Energy Law Group. Kathryn served as Deputy Director and Director of Research and Policy Analysis for the Climate Center from 2009-2018. Prior roles include Program Director, Northeast Policy, at Energy Foundation; Senior Associate in the Climate and Energy Program at the World Resources Institute; and Senior Research Fellow for Domestic Policy at the Pew Center on Global Climate Change. She has a BS in engineering from Swarthmore College, a Master of Environmental Management from the Yale School of the Environment, and a JD, cum laude, from Georgetown Law. Kathryn has served as a Commissioner on the District of Columbia's Commission on Climate Change and Resiliency since 2017 and was a member of the Engineering Advisory Council for Swarthmore College from 2013-2018. In 2016, she received the Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) Law and Finance Award, given by the Department of Energy, MIT Energy Initiative, and Stanford Precourt Institute for Energy.

AWARD WINNERS

Telling the Rest of the Story: Incorporating Indigenous Perspectives in Public Transportation Projects

AGENCIES AWARDED

Ohio Department of Transportation
Seneca Nation of Indians
Federal Highway Administration Ohio Division

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Delaware Nation
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
Pokagon Band of Potawatomi
The Shawnee Tribe
Cleveland Museum of Natural History
Ohio History Connection

Over a number of years, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) and the FHWA Ohio Division partnered with several federally recognized Indian Tribes on the Vrooman Road Bridge project. The project involved the realignment of Vrooman Road in Lake County, Ohio, and construction of a new high-level bridge on a new location. The project area crosses Tribal ancestral

lands in the Grand River Valley. The valley has been highly valued for millennia due to its biodiversity and reliable water source as evidenced by the many important archaeological sites in the surrounding area. The 1,800-foot-long high-level bridge is located in a natural setting and a metropark occupies the valley beneath the bridge. Working with federally recognized Tribal partners, ODOT looked for ways to highlight the cultural history of the river valley and help the structure blend in with its surroundings. The result of this collaboration included the incorporation of Native artwork into the new bridge design and development of an educational kiosk in the metropark. A Seneca artist created the designs that were incorporated into the massive bridge piers. The design along the parapet of the bridge is based on a common incised design seen on precontact pottery along the southern shore of Lake Erie. The educational kiosk depicts the history of the area, describes the important natural resources found in the valley, and explains the meaning of the designs on the bridge using words in the Delaware/Lenape, Miami, Potawatomi, Seneca, and Shawnee languages. The context-sensitive aesthetic treatments on the bridge transformed what could have been a concrete eyesore into a work of art that enhances the natural beauty of the river valley. Furthermore, the metropark kiosk provides an opportunity for the Tribes to share educational information with the public and have part of their story told.



View looking south showing three of the five piers with designs of an ice fisher, raccoon prints, and lacrosse stick. Photo: Ohio Department of Transportation



The Snake River Bridge Extension features a wildlife underpass and enhanced pathway that will help to address many challenges from wildlife-vehicle collisions to congestion.
Photos: Wyoming Department of Transportation

Snake River Bridge Reconstruction and Wildlife Crossing Integration

AGENCIES AWARDED

Wyoming Department of Transportation

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Teton County

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Town of Jackson

Teton County community members

Near Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming, the congested Teton Pass Highway (Wyoming Highway 22) crosses the Snake River on a deteriorated bridge deck that is nearing the end of its service life. Recognizing an opportunity to not only address a structurally deficient bridge but deliver lasting benefits for wildlife, travelers, and the surrounding environments, the Wyoming Department of Transportation (WYDOT) proactively pursued stakeholder and community engagement to shape and expand the project to strategically address a diverse set of challenges—including wildlife-vehicle collisions and congestion. As part of this, the project will extend the Snake River Bridge to accommodate a wildlife underpass and construct three additional wildlife crossings that will facilitate safe wildlife movements, especially for large animals such as moose, elk, and deer. WYDOT is also implementing improvements to enhance recreation and natural resource education in the

nearby Rendezvous Park, with work that will include increasing wetlands along ponds, creating a boardwalk, and deepening a community swimming hole. The project will ultimately support positive interactions with and appreciation for the natural environment while addressing the needs and ongoing health of wildlife and the ecosystem. In this work, WYDOT took what was a critical bridge replacement that is vital to the surrounding community and regional economy and expanded it to improve congestion, enhance community outcomes, and serve a variety of wildlife within the Greater Yellowstone National Park ecosystem.

Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation

AGENCIES AWARDED

Minnesota Department of Transportation

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Minnesota Environmental Quality Board

Minnesota Department of Commerce

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

McKnight Foundation

Xcel Energy

Great Plains Institute

Energy and Environmental Economics

Led by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Minnesota launched the Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation project, a multi-agency effort to identify specific strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) from transportation—the leading source of climate pollution in Minnesota—and to make progress toward State climate action goals. This was the first-ever State-agency-sponsored effort in the Midwest to develop specific strategies to reduce GHG emissions from transportation. As part of this project, MnDOT engaged in extensive collaboration with the public and other State agencies, hosting workshops with State and national transportation experts to identify potential strategies, leading public workshops around the State, gathering online feedback from more than 1,500 Minnesotans to identify public priorities and concerns, and identifying strategies, policy recommendations, and actions based on public engagement. This remarkable multi-agency collaborative effort led to numerous positive outcomes: low- and zero-emission vehicle standards that are projected to reduce GHG emissions by over one million tons by 2030; a \$2 million-per-year Clean Transportation Pilot Program to fund electric vehicles (EVs), EV charging, and other clean transportation technologies; the formation of a bipartisan five-State compact, REV Midwest; the country’s first EV credit for high-occupancy tolling lanes; and the creation of the MnDOT Sustainable Transportation Advisory Council, a formal group of public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders who recommend strategies for MnDOT to reduce climate pollution. This impressive project laid the groundwork for transportation climate action in Minnesota and serves as a model for other states throughout the Nation.



View of the present-day bluff location and projected 2100 approximate bluff retreat, which depicts the limit of the expected coastal erosion, as well as the proposed realignment. Photo: Google Earth with information from Caltrans District 4

Gleason Beach Roadway Realignment Project

AGENCIES AWARDED

California Coastal Commission
 County of Sonoma
 Caltrans District 4

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
 Jacobs Engineering
 Surfrider Foundation
 Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Hugging California’s Pacific Coast, State Route (SR) 1 is a critical transportation corridor for residents, businesses, visitors, and first responders. Despite the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) spending several million dollars over the last 20 years to stabilize a stretch of SR 1 near Gleason Beach in Sonoma County, no measures could stave off the effects of coastal erosion and advancing sea level rise. In close coordination with partner agencies, Caltrans led a robust, innovative, and inclusive public outreach and engagement program and designed a roadway realignment project that moves a segment of SR 1 nearly 400 feet inland. Not only will the project’s new 850-foot-long bridge maintain a safe transportation route for roadway users through 2100, but it will also improve plant and wildlife habitat, eliminate a fish migration barrier, and include new accommodations for bicyclists and pedestrians, enhancing public access to the California coastline. As the first regional transportation project to implement managed retreat in the face of sea level rise, this project will serve as an example of adaptive management in California and beyond.



As part of Pathways to Decarbonizing Transportation, the Minnesota Department of Transportation held many public meetings, including this one in Duluth, Minnesota. Photo: Timothy Sexton, Minnesota Department of Transportation



Example of roadway impacts and pavement damage from coastal hazards. Photo: FHWA-HIF-19-059 January 2020 Hydraulic Engineering Circular No. 25

Advancing Science to Better Consider the Ability of Nature-Based Solutions to Protect Transportation Infrastructure from Sea Level Rise and Flooding

AGENCIES AWARDED

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
 Auburn University
 University of New Hampshire
 University of South Alabama
 University of Wisconsin-Madison
 Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Effects of Sea Level Rise Program has included a focus on pavements since transportation professionals expressed a need for more information to effectively consider nature-based solutions within the current planning and design constraints for coastal projects. Through a competitive funding opportunity, two research teams are currently considering the transportation and ecological needs of Alabama, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine to evaluate the impact of repeated inundation of road surfaces on deterioration. These projects, and others funded in the future, will help to evaluate the use of nature-based solutions, such as sand dunes or living shorelines, rather than conventional hardened engineering designs, such as sea walls, to protect coastal roads from sea level rise and flooding. The project teams are evaluating the effects of sea level rise on coastal road and ferry access infrastructure, examining the causal linkages between coastal hazards and pavement

damage, and identifying primary coastal processes that cause pavement deterioration and damage. These projects address infrastructure and environmental considerations in a holistic way that marries the best coastal science on the effectiveness of nature-based solutions to reduce coastal flooding with the best science on pavement deterioration due to inundation. This research will lead to increased consideration of a range of conventional and nature-based approaches for the protection of road infrastructure in the future.

Mitigation Site for OR 140

AGENCIES AWARDED

Oregon Department of Transportation
 Federal Highway Administration Western Federal Lands
 Klamath Tribes Research Station
 Conway Construction Company
 U.S. Forest Service Restoration Services Team

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
 Oregon Department of State Lands
 Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Located in South Central Oregon, Klamath Lake is the largest lake in Oregon and is a critical habitat for two endangered fish species that are a cultural pillar for the Klamath Tribes. During the past half century, concrete laden with asbestos was

The Frontier MPO: Using Innovations from the FHWA Framework for Incorporating Health into Transportation Corridor Planning to Advance Health and Equity in Fort Smith, Arkansas

AGENCIES AWARDED

Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization
Arkansas Department of Transportation
Mercy Medical
City of Fort Smith/Fort Smith Transit
Arkansas Colleges of Health Education
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Sebastian County Department of Health
Western Arkansas Planning and Development District
100 Families United Way
Carrot Dirt Organics
64.6 Downtown
Fort Smith Community Health Council
Fort Chaffee Redevelopment Authority
Chasen Garrett Architects
First Presbyterian Church of Fort Smith
Area Agency on Aging
Fort Smith Dialysis Center
Arkansas Department of Health & Social Services
City of Fort Smith Police Department



Before and after images in the dry season showing the construction of channels and pond, as well as the removal of the contaminated dike. Photos: Oregon Department of Transportation

dumped along the Klamath Lake shoreline at this former mill site. In a project that started as legally required mitigation for highway improvements on adjacent Oregon Highway 140, what followed was an extensive wetland restoration resulting from an integrative cooperation among the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Klamath Tribes, multiple Federal agencies, and private personnel. The mitigation project included the dramatic transformation of 45 acres on the shores of Klamath Lake from a degraded, contaminated landscape to a complex of wetlands, channels, and open water. With close and productive collaboration among agencies and the Tribes, this project went far beyond its original scope as a highway mitigation project and resulted in the removal and encapsulation of contaminated debris, the excavation of a large bay and a series of channels, the restoration of former wetlands, the use of innovative approaches to water quality improvement—such as floating islands, plant mats, and channels—and the creation of a half-acre engineered pond that will serve as an experimental nursery for critically endangered fish and advance the science for their potential recovery.



A shared bike station along the Rogers Avenue Corridor is an example of the Frontier MPO's corridor improvements that incorporate health equity and mobility access. Photo: Veronica Robbins, Crawford County Public Works Department

Fort Smith, Arkansas suffers from some of the highest rates of obesity, cardiac arrest, diabetes, and lung cancer in the Nation, and nearly 25 percent of residents live in poverty. Access to medical facilities, fresh foods, and community activity centers in the region is hindered by the lack of connectivity, deteriorated sidewalks, nonexistent bicycle lanes and paths, and few transit amenities along major corridors, including the Rogers Avenue corridor. Leveraging FHWA’s Framework for Better Integrating Health into Transportation Corridor Planning, the Frontier Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) formed critical partnerships, enhanced public engagement to collect public health and equity data, and developed criteria for Rogers Avenue corridor improvements that incorporate health equity and mobility access. In partnership with Arkansas College of Health Education, Frontier MPO used the Our Voice Initiative—a smartphone app that allows users to take photos, geo-locate issues, provide narrative, and generate reports—to empower citizens to provide crowdsourced data, resulting in nearly 250 photos that helped highlight challenges, concerns, and inequities in historically marginalized neighborhoods. This highly successful project won grants to examine sustainable micro-freight hubs within low-income neighborhoods, develop action plans for a walkable region, improve health outcomes, implement safe infrastructure improvements at 22 intersections, and pilot shared micromobility for affordable, accessible housing. Through interagency and community collaboration, Frontier MPO established a new model for equitable health-based decision-making in the region’s transportation investments.

I-15/US-20 Connector PEL

AGENCIES AWARDED

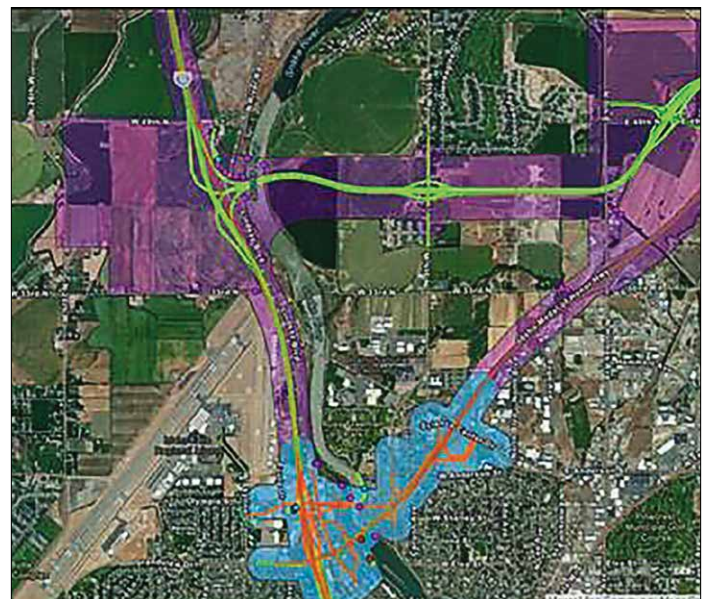
Idaho Transportation Department
Bonneville County
City of Idaho Falls
Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization
HDR Engineering Inc.
Horrocks Engineering
Federal Highway Administration Idaho Division Office

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Federal Aviation Administration
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
City of Idaho Falls Airport
Idaho Falls Power
Bonneville County Sheriff
Idaho Falls Fire Department
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office

Idaho National Laboratory
BMPO Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
Idaho State Police

For more than 20 years, stakeholders in Idaho Falls, Idaho, had conducted discussions and studies to consider improvements to the Interstate 15 (I-15) and U.S. Highway 20 (US-20) junction and corridors, without any resulting agreement for how to move forward. Taking a new approach, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) collaborated with the City of Idaho Falls, Bonneville County, and the Bonneville Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO) to conduct a Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) study, which proved to be an important preliminary step in redesigning the corridor to provide safe and reliable travel for the next 25 years and to meet anticipated future growth. Engaging in extensive proactive public involvement, ITD partnered with numerous local agencies, held multiple public meetings that saw record attendance, and conducted two neighborhood-specific meetings to address concerns. Through the PEL study process, ITD evaluated the potential impacts of more than a dozen alternative plans and removed from consideration those plans that would impact Veterans Memorial Park, a Tribal burial site, and historically disadvantaged communities. These efforts took what had previously been a seven- to ten-year process and completed it in three years. The success of the project’s collaboration, partnerships, and extensive proactive public involvement helped shorten the project timeline and build community support for two refined corridor redesign alternatives moving into environmental review. This effort was the first PEL study done in Idaho and is now the leading example for five more studies taking place across the State.



ArcGIS StoryMap on potential alternatives for the I-15 and US-20 junction and corridors, with a focus on wetlands in the study area. Image: Idaho Transportation Department



Pedestrians using the new park and trail system through downtown Lexington, Kentucky, which includes separated bike and pedestrian paths with landscaping. Photo: Ty Cole

Town Branch Commons Corridor

AGENCIES AWARDED

Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government
 Kentucky Transportation Cabinet
 Federal Highway Administration Kentucky Division Office
 Kentucky Division of Water
 AECOM
 SCAPE Landscape Architecture
 Lord Aeck Sargent
 Gresham Smith
 Strand Associates
 Pace Contracting

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Lexington Downtown Development Authority
 UK College of Design
 Bluegrass Community Foundation
 Town Branch Trail, Inc.
 Town Branch Park, Inc.
 Lextran
 Lexington Center Corporation
 The Rupp Arena, Arts & Entertainment District Task Force
 Kentucky Utilities
 Lexington Metropolitan Planning Organization

Town Branch Commons Corridor is a transformative park and trail system through downtown Lexington, Kentucky

that traces the historic Town Branch Creek, Lexington's first water source located in a culvert under modern-day streets. Led by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, a complex group of public, private, and nonprofit partners came together to plan, fund, and implement this corridor. The project transforms a vehicular passage into a safe multimodal public space connecting over 22 miles of continuous walking and biking paths, expands urban tree canopy in the corridor, manages stormwater, connects diverse neighborhoods along its path, and links the downtown core with the Greater Bluegrass Region. The project received funding from six different programs, including \$24 million in Federal funds, a \$7.1 million State infrastructure loan, and \$11.8 million in local funding. With multiple construction sites and timelines on this large-scale public infrastructure project, close and frequent collaboration among partners maximized construction efficiencies, reaped cost benefits from cooperative phasing, and minimized impacts to transit operations. Effective partnerships between park boards, local community advocates, project funding sponsors, neighborhood project developers, transit agencies, local nonprofit organizations, and State and Federal agencies, made this project possible. Multiple projects and visions for Town Branch Commons Corridor coalesced into a major public infrastructure improvement that connects people, increases safe biking and walking opportunities, expands the trail network, advances economic and environmental goals, and creates a more resilient community.

OR244: Whiskey Creek Culvert Replacement

AGENCIES AWARDED

Federal Highway Administration Oregon Division
Oregon Department of Transportation
Keller and Associates Inc.

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

National Marine Fisheries Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Oregon Department of State Lands
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

In northeast Oregon, a section of the Hilgard to Ukiah Highway (Oregon Route 244) was prone to flooding following heavy rains, rapid snowmelt, and other weather conditions, causing unsafe road conditions from ice and water on the pavement and roadway/shoulder damage from erosion. The primary cause of the flooding was an undersized culvert, which was in the wrong place—a decades-old 60-inch corrugated metal pipe—that connected Whiskey Creek to the Grande Ronde River. To address this problem, the Oregon Department of Transportation replaced the Whiskey Creek culvert with a 22-foot-wide, pre-cast reinforced concrete box culvert that improved the alignment of the confluence and can accommodate higher water flows. The project protected an adjacent archaeological site and wetlands and maintained traffic flow during construction. Furthermore, the new structure eliminated a partial fish passage barrier, opening access to nearly 16 miles of fish habitat. This culvert



The replacement of the Whiskey Creek culvert with a 22-foot-wide, pre-cast reinforced concrete box culvert. Photo: Oregon Department of Transportation

replacement project made the confluence of Whiskey Creek and the Grande Ronde River better able to withstand flooding, benefiting local landowners, Snake River Basin steelhead, natural stream processes, and the traveling public.

University Avenue Corridor Study and Roadway Improvement Project

AGENCIES AWARDED

Lafayette Consolidated Government
Acadiana Planning Commission
Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development, District Three CSRS, Inc.

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

HRI
Bridge Ministries
Lafayette Utility Systems

In Lafayette, Louisiana, the University Avenue commercial corridor was once a vibrant place until the oil bust of the 1980s, which resulted in economic decline. For businesses along University Avenue, previous improvements to the roadway resulted in acquisition of right-of-way that removed parking facilities and sidewalks that had provided access for residents—a change that created barriers for mobility. In 2016, Lafayette Consolidated Government partnered with the Acadiana Planning Commission's (APC) Metropolitan Planning Organization to conduct a corridor study along University Avenue utilizing Federal transportation funding. In conducting this



Rendering of potential University Avenue roadway improvements, including enhanced pedestrian infrastructure, and housing and retail developments. Image: CSRS, Inc.

work, the project team actively engaged minority communities to address injustices of the past and decades of neglect and envision a new transportation facility that would provide safe and equitable access for community members while serving as a catalyst for \$32 million in commercial redevelopment. The project team conducted public involvement as the first action and went beyond the traditional public engagement process of standard public meetings to display project information. The public led the conversation with the consultants on the expected goals and results of the roadway improvements, and APC worked to document and harness the history of the Four Corners neighborhood by engaging in intergenerational community visioning. APC staff used a technique called PhotoVoice to gather stories from elder residents, interview younger residents, and together create a vision for future redevelopment. The public determined the improvements of the roadway by utilizing data collection and studies from the consultation to decide the best solution for their area. The corridor plan has resulted in millions of dollars in Federal funding to improve the roadway and attract business investments, including mixed income housing and retail facilities, ultimately improving the livability and economic opportunity of the corridor for its residents.

Flint Hills Trail: Connecting Communities, Cultures, and Landscapes

AGENCIES AWARDED

Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
Kansas Department of Transportation

Kanza Rail-Trails Conservancy
Cook, Flatt & Strobel Engineers
RDG Planning & Design
Sunflower Foundation
Osawatomie Trail Task Force

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

City of Osawatomie
City of Ottawa
City of Osage City
City of Council Grove
City of Admire
City of Herington
Ottawa Chamber of Commerce

Passing through the largest remaining area of tallgrass prairie in the U.S., the Flint Hills Trail is the longest trail in Kansas and the eighth-longest rail trail in America. Part of the coast-to-coast American Discovery Trail, the Flint Hills Trail is a multimodal trail that provides safe routes to schools, businesses, and parks for people of all abilities and a safer alternate bike, pedestrian, and equestrian corridor off of State highways and county roads. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) conducted the planning of the trail to be equitable and inclusive of local cultures, interests, and histories, while providing accessible multimodal connections to cities, towns, rural communities, and the natural landscapes. In 2019, KDWP approved the use of e-bikes at all State parks, including the Flint Hills Trail, and eliminated a previous permit requirement at a connecting trail to make the now-157 miles of trails free to all populations, expand use, and spur tourism and economic growth. Communities have seen a surge in economic benefits along the trail, including the



Horseback riders on a six-mile roadless section of the trail in the heart of the Kansas Flint Hills, the largest remaining area of tallgrass prairie in the U.S. Photo: Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks

addition of campgrounds, shops, restaurants, and a \$4.4 million public development in Ottawa that includes green space, covered pavilions, and a playground. Upon completion of one additional trail, the Flint Hills Trail will provide a direct linkage of 242 miles of trails through nine counties. The Flint Hills Trail has become a destination trail in the Midwest and an example of leadership to other trail development efforts, resulting in nonprofit groups and other entities forming a new trail culture in Kansas.

SW 1st Street Bridge Replacement at Miami River

AGENCIES AWARDED

Florida Department of Transportation, District Six
United States Coast Guard, Seventh Coast Guard District
Florida Division of Historical Resources, State Historic Preservation Office
AECOM
Hardesty and Hanover, Inc.
Janus Research

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Miami River Commission
City of Miami Historic Preservation Division
Miami River Inn
Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
Pinnacle Consulting Enterprises
GLF Construction Corporation

Constructed in 1929, the SW 1st Street Bridge in downtown Miami, Florida, exceeded its design life by 30 years, exhibiting

structural deficiencies and advanced corrosion. The bridge also had problematic clearances within the Miami River and over North and South River Drives, as evidenced by repeated vessel and truck strikes. Replacing the deficient bridge was not straightforward, though, as it was connected via unique catwalks to adjacent residences of the historic Miami River Inn, which are features that contribute to the surrounding South River Drive Historic District. Facing initial significant stakeholder opposition to the project, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) District Six invested in historic resource preservation and consultation during project development and engaged in extensive community involvement. As part of this, FDOT formed the Cultural Resources Committee—comprised of representatives from the Miami River Inn, local stakeholders, and numerous local, State, and Federal agencies—whose main goal was to minimize cultural resource effects while meeting the project’s needs. Through this collaborative process, FDOT overcame initial stakeholder opposition, ensured the new bridge design retained compatibility with the surrounding Historic District, and avoided adverse effects to project-adjacent residences listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The resulting replacement bridge improved clearances for vehicular and vessel traffic, enhanced community connectivity with greenway connections and bicycle facilities, and improved safety and operations for multiple modes of transportation in and around downtown Miami. The project team’s approach accelerated this critical infrastructure project through the NEPA process, saved significant additional cost, and avoided an additional 24 months of environmental evaluation, while fostering public relations and preserving significant historic resources.



Looking northwest at completed bridge tender house and replacement bridge. Photo: Hardesty and Hanover, Inc.

Vermont Highways & Habitats: Road Ecology Training for Transportation Professionals

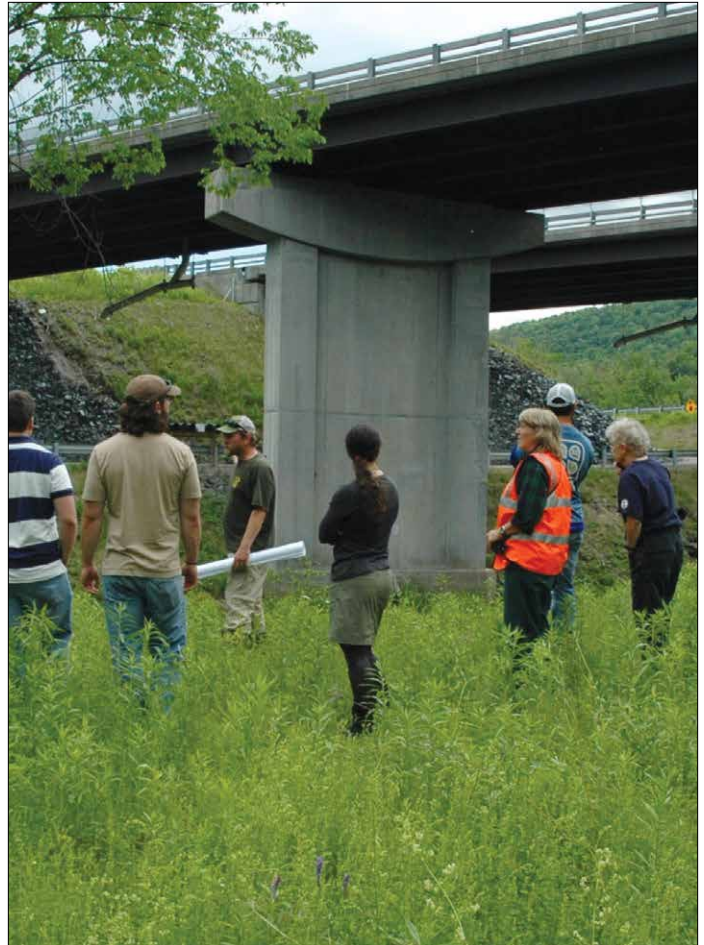
AGENCIES AWARDED

Vermont Agency of Transportation
Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

PROJECT CONTRIBUTORS

Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas
Keeping Track, Inc.

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has been conducting Highways & Habitats trainings since 2002, utilizing FHWA State Planning and Research funds. This training takes transportation professionals into the field to explore highway infrastructure's effects on habitat and collaboratively investigate the issues and solutions. With wildlife and habitat experts and Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department biologists as instructors, transportation practitioners with diverse roles in VTrans can see, up close, the habitats and wildlife that are endemic to Vermont. Widely recognized as culture changing, the Highways & Habitats training program has enabled project managers and engineers to approach projects with an embedded baseline understanding of road ecology and make informed decisions regarding wildlife and habitat on Federal-Aid projects. The demand for this information was so great that VTrans expanded the training to a tiered approach, now offering online trainings in addition to in-person classroom and field trainings. Highways & Habitats has been presented at regional and international conferences related to transportation and is now being modeled by others in the Northeast. Through this program, VTrans has become recognized as a leader among Departments of Transportation in terms of proactive wildlife initiatives. This training has greatly contributed to an agency culture and ethic that values environmental excellence.



Participants in a Roadside Edge Class visiting a wildlife shelf under an interstate.
Photo: Vermont Agency of Transportation



https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/environmental_excellence_awards/