Active Transportation for Federal Lands and Gateway Communities:
Planning and Partnering to Improve Visitor Access
National Outdoor Recreation Conference
April 24, 2018
Introductions

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Outline

- Overview of Federal Lands
- Why Active Transportation
- Transportation System to/within Fed Lands
- Planning & Project Development
- Partnerships & Funding
- Technical Resources
- Coming Soon! NPS Active Transportation Guidebook
- Q&A
Federal Lands and Active Transportation

- Each Federal Land Management Agency (FLMA) has a unique mission and purpose.
- None have policies related to active transportation, though...
- Most have policies with objectives that implementation of active transportation would help achieve.
- All are experiencing increased visitation.
Why Active Transportation

- Can assist with meeting FLMA missions and policy goals.
- Can address public’s increased desire to recreate in Federal lands, while also mitigating resource and congestion impacts.
- Provides economic benefit to both the FLMA and gateway communities.
Transportation System to & within Federal Lands
Design Flexibility & Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)
Multi-modal Transportation Options

The FHWA defines a connected network as “interconnected pedestrian and bicycle transportation facilities that allow people of all ages and abilities to safely and conveniently get where they need to go”.

[Images of transportation options]
CASE STUDY: North Moab Recreation Areas Alternative Transportation Project
Planning & Project Development

Planning is a critical step for envisioning and implementing transportation projects.

- Ensures bike and pedestrian considerations are incorporated.
- Happens at federal, state, regional, tribal, and local levels.
- Allows public involvement in setting long-term goals.
Getting Involved in the Process

- Process may be guided by policies and laws.
- Depending on project location, additional planning, coordination and consultation may be needed.
- Coordination helps to ensure an integrated transportation system.
Ways Active Transportation happens with FLMAs

Involving public land sites, typically happens through:

- The local municipality, regional-planning entity (i.e., MPO), or privately-led effort;
- A site-level/agency-led general management or comprehensive plan; or
- A project-specific process at the site-level.
Key Takeaway

Get involved in the process & communicate, early and often!
CASE STUDY: Improving Bike & Ped Access
to San Antonio Missions National Historical
Park

Introduction
San Antonio’s Missions are important historic and community landmarks. They attract nearly four million visitors a year and were granted World Heritage Site status in July 2015. Locally, the Missions are valuable community resources places where people attend church, picnic, play, walk for exercise, enjoy the outdoors, and learn about shared culture and history. The National Park Service (NPS) seized an opportunity to enhance the experience of residents and visitors alike by improving walking and bicycling connections between the Mission sites and their surrounding communities.

Benefits of Walking and Bicycling for South
San Antonio Missions
Bicycling and walking improvements, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, high-quality bike lanes, bicycle parking and trails, bring a host of benefits to the region, increasing community health, supporting the economy and improving quality of life, all while complementing the historic character of the Missions and their neighborhoods.

The following is a summary of the benefits of walking and bicycling for the historic Mission sites.

Quality of Life
Development patterns, policies and transportation improvements that promote walking and bicycling help reduce automobile dependency, parking demand and roadway congestion, and improve the community’s overall quality of life. In the South San Antonio Missions area, bicycling and walking improvements will connect residents and visitors to historic sites, churches and other cultural institutions. Trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes take up less space and require less asphalt than roadway expansion and car parking. Therefore, they help accommodate growth in visitors and residents while being more compatible with the historic character of the communities and their historic preservation policies. These improvements will make the Missions more accessible to those who cannot drive — seniors, children, and people with disabilities — or those who choose not to. Better bicycling and walking access can help increase the number of local visitors to each Mission site, and reduce the need to accommodate additional motor vehicles.

Health
Improving walking and bicycling routes in and around the Missions can reduce barriers to physical activity and help more people meet daily physical activity levels. The Mayo Clinic encourages walking regularly to prevent or manage conditions such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and type 2 diabetes. The American Medical Association and

Church service at Mission Concepcion

The fifteen-mile-long San Antonio River Walk is the spine of the regional bicycling and walking system and it connects the four Missions in this study: Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Mission San Juan and Mission Espada. However, walking and biking connections between the River Walk, the Missions, and the adjacent neighborhoods are often missing or in poor condition. This study examines the walking and bicycling networks in and around the four Missions and issues recommendations to make the networks more connected and the historic sites more accessible by foot and bike.

The NPS and community partners are working together to enhance bicycle and pedestrian access to the Missions and related historic sites. Community efforts include the

Mission Trail Access Study - Walking Community Connections
CASE STUDY: Considering Bicycle and Pedestrian Access in the Kilauea Point NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan
CASE STUDY: Lake Lowell and Deer Flat NWR Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan

VISION STATEMENT

The Lake Lowell Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Plan will result in a long-range plan that will allow a coordinated effort between the various stakeholder agencies to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities that will provide a safer environment for the growing number of users choosing non-motorized transportation modes within the Lake Lowell area.
Developing an Inventory of Existing Conditions and Programs

- Identify what data is needed to examine issues and solutions.
- Identify what data is readily available and options for getting that data.
- Think creatively about how to get data.
- Opportunity for gateway communities and partners to assist their Federal land.
CASE STUDY: US FWS Bicycle and Pedestrian Counting Pilot Project
Importance of Establishing Priorities

- Can position project for when funding is available.
- Make project ‘Shelf ready’ for new/additional funds.
- Will demonstrate community support and minimizes the risk of moving the project forward.
Importance of Partnerships

Partnerships present opportunities for leveraging funding and other resources.

Partnerships:
- Promote awareness about active transportation.
- Find support and champions among stakeholders.
- Collaborate on efforts.
- Provide diverse and useful input.
- Encourage continuous engagement and participation.
- Leverage funding and resources.
Funding

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside and Recreational Trails Program

The Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside (TA Set-Aside) and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) are two important Federal Highway Administration programs that benefit National Park Service (NPS) units and their partners. While both programs have several eligible project types, NPS units typically utilize the TA Set-Aside to fund the development and rehabilitation of paved, multi-use trails and historic transportation facilities like bridges. The NPS typically use the RTP to fund the development, maintenance, and restoration of recreational trails, which are usually natural surface. The TA Set-Aside program is administered by state departments of transportation (DOTs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs). The RTP is usually administered by state resource agencies. In most states, NPS units can apply directly for the TA Set-Aside and RTP.

How can parks access this funding?

Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside

The TA Set-Aside (formerly known as the Transportation Alternatives Program/Transportation Enhancements) funds the development of facilities for nonmotorized transportation, community improvement activities such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. Projects are selected through a competitive process administered by state DOTs and MPOs.

Park staff can reach out to state DOTs or MPOs to determine when the next funding call for projects will occur. States and MPOs determine which projects are selected through a competitive process. In most states, NPS units are eligible to sponsor a TA Set-Aside project. To receive these funds, parks must meet individual state requirements and participate in competitive grant rounds that can occur annually, biennially, or when funds are otherwise available.

Recreational Trails Program

RTP provides funding to states to create and maintain recreational trails for motorized and nonmotorized trail uses, including hiking, bicycling, inline skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles. In most states, a state resource agency, such as a state park or natural resources department, administers the program.

NPS units can reach out to RTP State Administrators for guidance on state policies and project eligibility requirements.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP)

The Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) was established in 23 U.S.C. 204 to improve transportation facilities that provide access to, are adjacent to, or are located within Federal lands. The Access Program supplements State and local resources for public roads, trail systems, and other transportation facilities, with an emphasis on high-use recreation sites and economic generators.

The Program is designed to provide flexibility for a wide range of transportation projects in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

The Access Program is funded by contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund and subject to obligation limitation. Funds will be allocated among the States using a statutory formula based on road mileage, number of bridges, land area, and visitation.

Projects are selected by a Programming Decision Committee (PDC) established in each State. The PDCs request project applications through a call for projects. The frequency of the calls is established by the PDCs. The interactive map below provides the status of the call for projects.

Program Guidance

- Access Program Implementation Guidance (Acrobat, 65 KB)
- Access Program Fact Sheet
- Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act Fact Sheet (Acrobat, 413 KB)
- Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number: 20.224

Status of the call for projects

To learn more about the call for projects status, points of contact or to access a link to a State FLAP webpage, click on a state in the map below.
CASE STUDY: Bryce Canyon Multi-use Trail
Technical Resources for Active Transportation Planning in Federal Lands

▪ Federal Lands site specific staff vary location to location.

▪ Additional sources for Federal Lands Transportation Technical Assistance:
  ○ Federal Lands Highway
  ○ U.S. DOT Volpe Center
  ○ FLMA Regional and National Staff

▪ FHWA and NPS Resource Guides
NPS Active Transportation Guidebook

- Coming soon!
- Supporting bicycling and walking as active transportation to and within National Parks
- Beneficial to all federal land management sites, partners, and communities
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