

FUNDING SOURCES

Location:

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS; SIDEWALKS; STATE AID;

Scope:

Connecticut laws/regulations; Background;



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FUNDING SOURCES FOR MUNICIPAL SIDEWALK CONSTRUCTION

By: Paul Frisman, Principal Analyst

You wanted to know about state and federal funding sources for municipal sidewalk construction.

SUMMARY

We have identified five primary federal and state funding sources for municipal sidewalks: the Surface Transportation Program's (STP) STP-Urban and STP-Enhancement programs, the Safe Routes To School program, the Local Capital Improvement Program (LoCIP), and the Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP). We summarize these programs below. This report does not address sidewalks the state funds as part of a state project.

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION (FHWA) FUNDING

The FHWA provides funding for municipal sidewalk construction through three programs: The STP-Urban, STP-Enhancement, and Safe Routes To Schools programs.

STP-Urban Program

Under the STP-Urban program, the FHWA, working through the state Department of Transportation (DOT) and each of the 15 state Regional Planning Organizations (RPO), usually provides 80% of the funding to build a sidewalk and any associated right-of-way. Municipalities must cover the costs of designing the sidewalk and 20% of the construction and right-of-way acquisition costs. However, DOT is currently updating its policy for sidewalk installation and these percentages may change.

STP-Urban funds are distributed to RPOs. Each RPO solicits potential projects from member towns, ranks them, and submits the prioritized list to DOT. Following a comprehensive review, a public informational meeting, and municipal endorsement, DOT schedules the projects based on available funds.

DOT guidelines, which are currently being updated, state that the STP-Urban program is meant to address regional, not just local, priorities. According to the existing DOT guidelines for sidewalk construction (available on-line at:

http://www.ct.gov/dot/lib/dot/documents/dconsultdesign/pavement_sidewalk_guidlines.pdf),

projects to build new sidewalks will be considered for funding through the STP-Urban program if they satisfy generally accepted standards of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). A new sidewalk must (1) be built on an eligible road (primarily, though not necessarily, a major through road); (2) provide a safety benefit to the community; and (3) comply with AASHTO standards and all federal requirements, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. A sidewalk project can include a new sidewalk or a new segment to fill gaps in an existing sidewalk. But replacement of an existing sidewalk, park benches, ornamental lighting, and similar elements are ineligible for funding.

Towns are generally responsible for inspecting the sidewalk and record-keeping for the project. They are always responsible for maintaining the sidewalk. Currently, STP-Urban pavement rehabilitation and sidewalk projects can cover no more than 15% of a particular RPO's annual funding allocation.

According to DOT, the state receives about \$35 million annually for STP-Urban projects from the FHWA.

STP-Enhancement

The FHWA also gives the state about \$8 million a year for the STP- Enhancement program, which also can fund new sidewalks. However, DOT states that funding for this program under the most recent multi-year federal transportation funding authorization ("SAFETEA-LU") has already been committed.

DOT also notes that STP funding sources and amounts may change, depending on the legislation that eventually succeeds SAFETEA-LU.

Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS)

In this program, eligible schools apply through municipalities for federal funds to improve the ability of primary and middle school children to safely walk and bicycle to school. New sidewalks and pedestrian and bicycle improvements are among the projects eligible for SRTS funding if the projects are within one mile of a primary or middle school. Applicants must have an SRTS plan in place.

Grants, which range from \$150,000 to \$500,000, are made through a statewide competitive process. DOT reimburses towns for eligible costs. More information on SRTS grants can be found at: <http://www.ctsaferoutes.ct.gov/> and

http://www.ctsaferoutes.ct.gov/pdf/CTSRTSPlan_Guidelines_010808.pdf. Sample SRTS plans can be found at: <http://www.walkitbikeitct.org>.

LoCIP

The LoCIP program provides formula grants to municipalities for capital improvements, including sidewalk and pavement improvement projects (CGS § 7-536 (a) (4)). A municipality may apply to the Office of Policy and Management (OPM) for reimbursement after it spends money on an authorized LoCIP project. The amount reimbursed cannot exceed the municipality's available LoCIP balance.

More information on LoCIP and LoCIP guidelines are available at OPM's website:
http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/igp/grants/locip/locip_guidelines.pdf.

SMALL TOWN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STEAP)

Under this program, OPM provides grants to small municipalities for developing or improving infrastructure, including roads, accessways, and other site improvements (CGS § 4-66g). More information on this program is available at http://www.ct.gov/opm/cwp/view.asp?a=2965&q=382970&opmNav_GID=1793#Communities.

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Paris gets \$832,960 to build sidewalks

From Staff Reports

Jackson Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

PARIS — Walking is about to get a little bit easier in Paris. The city has been awarded over \$800,000 in a grant to build sidewalks.

In a press release Tuesday, Deputy Gov. Jim Henry announced the award of an \$832,960 Transportation Alternative Grant to the city of Paris for Wilson Street pedestrian access.

This project includes construction of

sidewalks along Wilson Street from Patriot Avenue to Lone Oak Road, along Patriot Avenue from S. Wilson Street to Lankford Road, and along Lankford Road. The project also includes curb and gutter, signage, pavement markings and ADA upgrades.

"The city of Paris is committed to providing safe pedestrian and bicyclist facilities for its residents, and linking critical economic, residential and recreational areas," Henry said in the release. "Projects like this enhance the lives of Tennesseans, and make our communities

more livable. I'm pleased the state can assist."

The transportation alternative grant is made possible through a federally funded program formerly known as transportation enhancement, and is administered by the Tennessee Department of Transportation.

"Through these grants, TDOT has funded more than \$372 million in non-traditional transportation projects," TDOT Commissioner John Schroer said in the release. "This program has assisted communities all over the state in their ef-

forts to revitalize downtowns, highlight historic areas, provide alternative means of transportation, and increase opportunities for economic development."

A variety of activities, such as the restoration of historic facilities, bike and pedestrian trails, landscaping and other non-traditional transportation projects, are eligible for grant funds under the federal program.

Sen. John Stevens (R-Huntingdon) and Rep. Tim Wrigau (R-Buchanan) represent Henry County in the Tennessee General Assembly.



Brownsville, Humboldt making history

From Staff Reports

Jackson Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK - TENNESSEE

The cities of Brownsville and Humboldt are making history in Tennessee, each having additions to the National Register of Historic Places.