

FHWA Awards The Piñones Trail for Excellence in Non-Motorized Transportation

The Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works (DOT & PW), and the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources (DNER) were honored with the 2001 Environmental Excellence Award in Non Motorized Transportation for “The Piñones Trail”. The trail was one of the 13 projects selected among 145 nominated by 35 states, including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. Started in 1995, these biennial FHWA Awards recognize partners, projects, and processes that achieve environmental excellence.



The Piñones Trail, a multipurpose trail, provides facilities for cyclists and pedestrians, adjacent to the coastal state road PR#187 and bordering the Piñones and Torrecillas Natural Reserves, areas of significant ecological and scenic values.

The trail is about 3.65 meters wide, and about 11 kilometers in length. It was built at a cost of approximately \$7.5 million, and was financed partially with Transportation Enhancement Funds, provided by the Federal Highway Administration.



In This Edition...

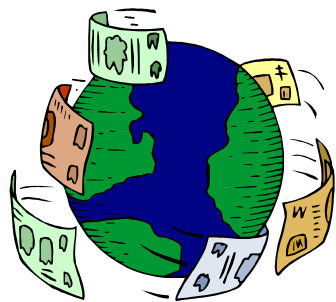
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The Piñones Trail provides a safe route for cyclists and pedestrians with recreational and tourist attractions, while preserving and respecting the ecological integrity of the area it traverses.



Martha I. Bravo-Colunga, from the Puerto Rico Department of Transportation and Public Works, and Anselmo De Portu from the Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, were present at the Ceremony that took place in the Washington Headquarters of the Federal Highway Administration, to receive this prestigious award.

** Adapted from: Martha Bravo-Colunga*

An Overview of The Transportation Enhancement Program

The U.S. Department of Transportation decided to develop a more balanced transportation system by encouraging projects that are “more than asphalt, concrete and steel.” This new focus involves consideration of environmental, cultural, economic and social conditions, in an effort to create more balance within the transportation system. An important program at the heart of this ideal about quality of life is transportation enhancements, known as TE.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA), passed in 1991, create the Transportation Enhancement Program. The primary goal of this program is to “leave a place better than it was found.” It was a groundbreaking law with a new focus on transportation, which offered communities new funding opportunities to help expand transportation choices such as safe bicycle and pedestrian facilities, scenic routes, beautification and other investments that increase recreation opportunity and access.

At the present time, more than \$2.4 billion has been invested in more than 12,000 projects. The project known as TEA-21, which is discussed further on expanded the TE activities to the existing nine created by TEP. (Transportation Enhancement Program)

The twelve federally funded, community focused activities associated with transportation enhancements are described below:

1. Provision of Facilities for Pedestrians and Bicycles

Provides bicycle and pedestrian features that are not included or required as part of routine transportation projects.



These include activities that enhance the transportation system through more aesthetic routing or design, construction of facilities where none exist, or by improving existing facilities to make them more usable for bicycles and pedestrians.

2. Provision of Safety and Educational Activities for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

This includes non-construction safety-related activities such as bicycle and pedestrian safety training, cost of facilitators and classes. It may also include related training materials such as brochures, videotapes training aids, and rent for leased space and limited staff salaries.

3. Acquisition of Scenic Easements and Scenic or Historic Sites

This category refers to the purchase, donation, transfer, or trade of lands which possess significant aesthetic, historic, archaeological, cultural, natural, visual, or open space values, including land and property listed in or eligible for listings in the National Register of Historic Places.

4. Scenic or Historic Highway Programs

This category covers the protection and enhancement of state or federally designated scenic or historic highways. Funds may be used for projects that will protect and enhance the scenic, historic, cultural, natural, and archaeological integrity and visitor appreciation of an existing highway and adjacent area, including welcome centers.



5. Landscaping and Other Scenic Beautification

This category includes landscape and street-scene planning, design, and construction of projects, which enhance the aesthetic or ecological resources along transportation corridors, points of access, and lands qualifying for other categories of transportation enhancement activities.



6. Historic Preservation

Projects in this category should enhance the transportation system by improving the ability of the public to appreciate the historic significance of the project itself or the area to be served by the project. Funds may be used for the identification, evaluation, recording, documentation, acquisition, protection, rehabilitation, and restoration or any combination of the foregoing, of any historic or archaeological district, site, structure, landscape, or object included in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

7. Rehabilitation and Operation of Historic Transportation Buildings, Structures, or Facilities

Historic transportation buildings are associated with the operation, passenger and freight use, construction, or maintenance of any mode of transportation where such buildings is listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

8. Preservation of Abandoned Railway Corridors

This category includes the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and development of corridors for public uses including bicycle and pedestrian use. It permits the development and rehabilitation of privately owned rail corridors open to the general public without charge.

9. Control and Removal of Outdoor Advertising

This category covers expenditures for the removal of existing signs, displays, and devices on highways that are not classified as local roads.

10. Archaeological Planning and Research

This category includes, but is not limited to, research on sites eligible for transportation enhancement funds; experimental projects in archaeological site preservation and interpretation; planning to improve identification, evaluation, and treatment of archaeological sites; development of national and regional research designs; and recovery and synthetic research.

7. Transportation Museum Establishments

This category is for capital improvements to establish museums with a focus on transportation, or for the purchase of artifacts related to transportation that will be displayed in a transportation museum.

8. Environmental Mitigation to Address Water Pollution Due to Highway Run-off or Reduce Vehicle-Caused Wildlife Mortality While Maintaining Habitat Connectivity

This category includes projects such as mitigation to address highway storm water runoff through erosion controls or detention and sediment pond construction, runoff pollution studies, wildlife crossing, or wildlife highway mortality studies.



The basic Federal eligibility requirements for TE projects under both ISTEA and TEA-21 are that they are one of the 12 defined activities, and be related to surface transportation. In most cases, the Federal Government pays 80% of the project cost, and the project sponsor is responsible for the remaining 20%.



If interested in applying for TE funds, contact Martha I. Bravo, Transportation Enhancements Coordinator, at the Department of Transportation and Public Works, 16th floor, Minillas South Building.



*Adapted from: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov>

TEA-21 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, (TEA-21), signed in June, 1998 is a direct successor to the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) passed in 1991. This law leaves the groundbreaking reforms of ISTEA intact, and provides new opportunities for progress and innovation.

Basically, this transportation-focused program enhances the positive aspects of the past ISTEA program. In terms of money and federal funding, TEA-21 authorizes \$217 billion in funding over six years, which is 40 percent more than ISTEA. A 54 percent decrease occurred in the share of the total funding dedicated to the construction of new highways. This gives communities a real choice of whether to use their funds to construct new roads, if they are really needed. There is a modest increase in the amount of funding devoted to repair and preserve the existing road system, from 23.8 percent to 24.9 percent. There is also a slight increase in the share of total funds that cover transit. Funding for transit developments makes up 18.1 percent of the funding that falls under TEA-21. Previously, under ISTEA transit received only 17.3 percent of the federal funds. Under ISTEA, the program called Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) didn't get a real opportunity to fully develop. TEA-21 provides a 35 per-

cent increase in funding to \$8.1 billion to help communities reach national standards for clean air, and reduce air pollution.

The Transportation Enhancements Program, (TEP) provides benefits to communities, the environment and aesthetic values. Funding was increased by 58 percent over ISTEA. Transportation Enhancements funds are available for the following activities 1. The provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; 2. Environmental mitigation to address water pollution due to highway runoff, or reduce wildlife mortality, while maintaining habitat connectivity; 3. The establishment of transportation museums. Eligibility for this program is determined by two basic considerations: that the proposed activity be one of the twelve listed TE activities; and that the activity be related to surface transportation. Surface transportation includes water as a surface, and includes canals, light-houses, docks, or piers.



* Adapted from <http://www.tea21.org/guide>

Puerto Rico's Vehicle and Traffic Law #22

In a previous edition of *El Puente*, (Vol. 14, #1) an article was included, which summarized the new important aspects of the recent Vehicle and Transit Law 22 of Puerto Rico. The penalties for infractions were emphasized. This edition will elaborate on two of the chapters of this law that are of great importance to our motorists and pedestrians.

Pedestrians' Obligations and Motorist's Responsibilities Toward Them

Article 9.02: Responsibilities for pedestrians to follow while crossing a public road:



- When crossing a road, other than an intersection, the pedestrian will yield right of way to all oncoming traffic.
- When crossing at intersections, pedestrians must follow the marked crossing zone. One should only cross when there is a green light in the direction of the perpendicular traffic, or when instructed to do so by crossing lights.
- Pedestrians should only cross through the specifically marked crossing path, between two consecutive intersections controlled by traffic lights.
- When tunnels or other structures are provided, pedestrians should use them. It is prohibited to cross these tunnels, bridges or other structures on bicycles, mopeds, motorcycles, and other similar vehicles.

- Under no circumstances should a pedestrian cross an intersection diagonally, unless authorized or instructed by a traffic or police officer.
- Pedestrians should use the sidewalks at all times, where they are provided, and if no sidewalks exist, the pedestrians should walk (if possible) on the left border of the road with extreme caution, facing the oncoming traffic.



Any pedestrian who walks through the public roads in a negligent manner, and does not follow the specified rules will commit a misdemeanor, and if convicted, must pay a fine of \$50. If an accident is caused by the negligence of the pedestrian, the fine will be \$500.



Article 9.03- Responsibilities of drivers toward pedestrians

- When no traffic lights are present or if they are malfunctioning, the driver should yield right of way to pedestrians if they are in the way of the flowing traffic. By reducing speed and stopping, if necessary, every pedestrian may cross a public road in a safe manner.

- No driver should pass, or try to pass a vehicle that has stopped, or slowed down to let pedestrians cross a public road.
- All drivers should be extremely careful not to come in contact with pedestrians. Even further precautions should be taken when the pedestrians are children, elderly or handicapped. These precautions should be observed even when the pedestrians are not following the correct crossing procedure, or are using the public road in an illegal manner.



All drivers who fail to follow the norms stated in Article 9.03 will commit an administrative penalty and will be fined \$50. No vehicles may travel, at any given moment, on a security zone.

Vehicle Size and Weight Regulations

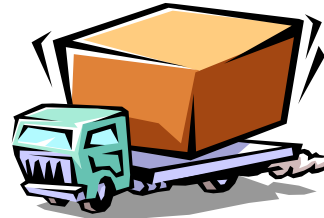
Article 15.01- Basic Rule:

No motor vehicle or towing rig may travel on public roads, carrying an excessive load, or a load that extends beyond the dimensions of the hitch or vehicle. This also applies to cargo that may fall out of where it is transported, onto the road and may affect traffic flow and public safety.

Article 15.02- Cargo vehicles' regulations on dimensions and weight

- No vehicle exceeding 13 feet, 6 inches from the floor may travel on public roads.
- Buses and Trucks must be less than 40 feet in length.

- More than two vehicles attached together are not permitted to travel on public roads.
- Two vehicles that are joined or attached may not exceed 75 feet in length.

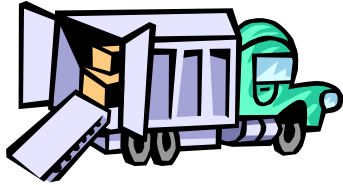


- No vehicle or combination of 2 vehicles may travel on public roads if their cargo extends 3 feet to the front or 6 feet past the rear of the last vehicle.
- Vehicles must be less than 8 feet, 6 inches wide.
- If the cargo extends past the rear of the vehicle, a red flag, with dimensions 12 inches by 12 inches must be placed on the cargo, or a red light.

- Vehicles transporting explosives must place a red flag with dimensions 18 inches wide and 30 inches long, in front of the vehicle, on a place where it is visible from all directions. The flag must contain the word "Danger" or "Peligro" in white letters, high measure 12 inches tall. Signs indicating "explosives" or "explosivos" must be placed on the side of the vehicle. Two (2) fire extinguishers must be carried on board. Traveling with explosives during the night is prohibited.



- All cargo vehicles must be free of cracks, holes or structural damage that may allow the cargo to be spilled or to fall onto the road. If so, the vehicle may not travel on public roads.



- No type of hitch or connection may be used if it exceeds 15 feet in length. This includes ropes and chains. If the material being transported is telephone poles, they may exceed 15 feet, but never 25 feet.
- No vehicle (including the cargo) may exceed the weight limit posted on bridges.
- The regulations specified above do not apply when a special permit has been obtained, and when transporting structural pieces that cannot be divided. No permit is necessary if the entire length of the cargo is 80 feet or less.
- No vehicle may travel on public roads if its weight exceeds 110,000 lbs., except when a special permit is obtained.

Article 15.03- Special Permits



Special permits may be given, but for a limited time, authorizing the transport of cargo, contrary to what has been stated in the previous article. The permit must be placed inside the vehicle, along with the vehicle's registration papers. Each permit requires a \$50 fee.

Article 15.04

- No person may travel on top of the cargo, or on any part of the vehicle, other than the cabin. This does not apply to vehicles for public services such as trash collecting and fire trucks, among others.

Article 15.05- Fines and Penalties

- Any person who does not comply with Articles 15.02, 15.03, and 15.04 will commit an administrative fault and will be fined \$100.
- If failure to comply with the articles stated above results in injury or death, the person has committed a misdemeanor. If convicted, the fine is no less than \$500, and no more than \$5,000, and a reclusion fine of no more than 6 months, or both penalties, depending on the discretion of the court.
- Any motor vehicle may be stopped, at any time of day or night, by the Police, or certain authorized government inspectors, to determine if they are complying with the law. Any vehicle that evades or does not stop when told to by the respective authorities will commit a misdemeanor, and if convicted, faces a fine of no more than \$1,000.
- These regulations are not applied to vehicles belonging to the U.S. Army, or Puerto Rico National Guard.



Any person who does not comply with these size and weight regulations will be obligated to pay the following fines:

- **Weight:** **\$50** fine, plus 5 cents for every pound in excess to the regulation.
- **Size:** **\$50** fine for the first infraction, and **\$75** for further infractions.

*Additional information can be found at :

<http://www.dtop.gov.pr>



Future



Events

May 7-10, 2002

III PROVIAL de Las Américas

Rosario, Argentina

Point of Contact:

Pan American Institute of Highways

(202) 366-3619

July 27-31, 2002

2002 National LTAP Annual Meeting

Burlington, Vermont

Point of Contact:

Vermont Local Roads Program

802-654-2652

hlambert@smcvt.edu

June 2-4 2002

Region IV LTAP Meeting

San Juan, PR

Point of Contact:

Gisela González

Puerto Rico Transportation

Technology Center

Tel. 787-834-6385

www.prt2.org

August 1, 2002

First Congress of Design and Construction of Highways and Bridges

Windham Conquistador Hotel,

Fajardo, P.R.

Point of Contact:

Eng. Fernando Fagundo, HTA

Tel. 787-729-1531