

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Request
from the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)

From: Director, Office of Environmental Policy
Washington, D.C. 20590

To: Regional Federal Highway Administrators

Date: June 30, 1988

Reply to
Attn. of: HEV-20

Recently the RTC sent each Division Administrator an FOIA request. When the request was brought to our attention, we determined that a centralized response was the most appropriate treatment. Attached for your information is a copy of our response to the FOIA request.

Representatives of this office met with Mr. David G. Burwell, President, RTC, on June 15. As a result of that meeting, we were made aware there are a large number of local Rail-Trials projects that may have uses for bridges of various lengths. As a nonprofit organization, RTC may be an excellent potential recipient of historic spans that are being replaced and would otherwise be demolished. The attached brochure provides more information on the RTC organization and mission.

Please notify your Divisions that each State department of transportation (DOT) should add the RTC to its notification list concerning the availability of historic bridges. Notifications and advertisements should be provided to: Mr. David G. Burwell, President, RTC, 1400 Sixteenth Street, NW., Washington, D.C. 20036. We are providing sufficient copies of the RTC brochure to permit the Division Offices to share them with their State DOTs. Although Mr. Burwell will coordinate the availability of historic bridges with all of the Rail-Trails groups, we expect that the Division Offices will encourage the State DOTs to notify nearby groups directly. To assist them, we are providing copies of a directory of all Rail-Trails groups for your distribution.

/ Original Signed By /

Ali F. Sevin

3 Attachments

US. Department
of Transportation

Federal Highway
Administration
IN REPLY REFER TO: HEV-20

Mr. David G. Burwell
President, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
1400 Sixteenth Street, NW.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Mr. Burwell:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Administrators dated May 31. The FHWA has determined that a centralized response is appropriate since some of the items requested have agency-wide policy implications.

We appreciated the opportunity to meet with you on Wednesday, June 15, to discuss your concerns. Our response to your numbered requests is as follows:

1. At our meeting, we provided you with the latest information on historic bridge inventories collected from our field offices. It offers a clear picture of which States have completed, are about to complete, or are about to begin their historic bridge inventories.
2. The Environmental Analysis Division of the Office of Environmental Policy has copies of most of the completed and published historic bridge inventories. You or your staff are welcome to review them in our office during working hours. You should contact Mr. Bruce Eberle at 366-9173 to make arrangements. In some cases, copies of published inventories may be available at a minimal charge from the individual State department of transportation (DOT). Mr. Eberle will assist you if you desire to purchase copies.
3. Detailed information on historic bridges planned or scheduled for demolition is not readily available through the FHWA. The best source of this information is the individual State DOTs because they select, plan, and ultimately schedule bridge work. We are enclosing a list of the names and addresses of State DOT officials in the environmental area who are most likely to be familiar with the specific information you desire.
4. The most complete statement of policy relating to historic bridges under Section 123(f) of the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act and Section 4(f) of

the Department of Transportation Act is contained in the memorandum dated July 22, 1987. Your FOIA request indicates that you already have this document. Let me remind you that prior to demolishing any historic bridge the FHWA consults with the State Historic Preservation Officer and, if appropriate, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

5. We suggest that you contact each State DOT and make them aware of the needs of your 160 Rails-to-Trails managers for bridges of various sizes. In addition, you could contact the SHPOs to alert them to your continuing needs for historic spans. When we receive copies of your brochure, we will transmit them to our Regional Offices. We will request them to distribute the brochures to our Division Offices and to each State DOT along with your desire to be notified of the availability of any historic bridge. We will identify you as an appropriate contact for all Rails-to-Trails groups.

We look forward to working with you in the future. We are gratified that your group desires to help the FHWA and the States preserve and reuse historic bridges.

/ Original Signed By /

Ali F. Sevin

Enclosure