

Oldham, La Grange receive \$1.14 million for road projects
TARC service extended a year

By Andrea Uhde

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Ona Hull has ridden the TARC express bus from La Grange to her job in downtown Louisville for seven months -- helping her save about \$20 a week in gas.

So when she learned a few months ago that Oldham County might not have the money to pay for another year of the bus, she began to worry.

"It was a concern for everybody. I think that if we lost it, it would hurt us quite a bit."

The route's fate is looking better. Last week, the county received a \$196,000 federal grant through the state to pay for another year of the bus service.

"It was exactly what we needed," Judge-Executive Duane Murner said. But "it looks like this is the last year."

He said the bus rates -- now at \$1 -- might rise next year if more money isn't available.

Oldham and La Grange last week received a total of \$1.14 million for projects that include the express bus route and road improvements.

La Grange was awarded \$354,400 for improvements to historic Main Street, including landscaping, relocation of parking and sidewalks and tree replacement. The changes will help the city maintain its "quiet zone" status, keeping it in compliance with Federal Railway Administration regulations.

The sidewalks will be connected to a bike and pedestrian greenway.

Oldham County received \$400,000 in road bond funds to improve Locke and Goshen lanes in northern Oldham, and \$192,000 to build bike and pedestrian trails near three Oldham schools to help students more safely walk to class.

Locke Lane, which runs from Ky. 329 to U.S. 42, handles "a lot of traffic," said Magistrate Rick Rash, who represents that area.

"It's needed very badly," he said. "It's about 14 feet wide, windy and has no site distance.

It's so bad the buses won't even use it."

Goshen Lane, which connects with U.S. 42, is in a fast-growing area of Goshen and is 13 feet wide in most spots.

The trails near the schools will include signs, marking and bike racks. There also will be educational programs.

"These things are really competitive," Transportation Cabinet Secretary Bill Nighbert said last week when he announced the grants. "Not everybody gets money."

For the 100 or so riders each day on the express bus between Oldham and Louisville, it's greatly appreciated news. They depend on the bus to take them from one of three park-and-ride lots in Oldham to their jobs in Louisville (and back) each day.

The express bus service began in August 2005.

"It's not just important to me, but I think to everybody out there," said Hull, who works for the Rawlings Group. "The bus is getting more and more crowded all the time. People are starting to use it more."

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