We are attempting to establish a rail trail on an old CSX ROW. We have excellent local community support, but we have a couple of issues that are impeding progress:

When CSX sold off their ROW, Carter County purchased some 4 miles of it and has been using it as a rural road. Several weeks ago, the County Fiscal Court gave us permission to put a trail paralleling the County-owned ROW . In the area we are presently working, the county’s road occupies about 16 feet in the center of a 100 foot wide ROW, so there is plenty of room on both sides of the road to create a safe multi-use trail. The road averages about 4-6 vehicles per hour.

The county road passes over three old CSX bridges. Each bridge is about 150 feet long, and are only wide enough to accommodate one lane of traffic. Our plan was route a walkway along the sides of the vehicle lane which crosses each bridge. The walkways would be about 14 inches above the vehicle roadway, and would be about three feet wide. Railings for the walkway would be added to the bridge on the outside of the walkway. We did not intend to add a railing to the inside (traffic side) of the walkways.

We have just been notified by our grant funding source, the Governor’s Office Of Local Development (“GOLD”), that they will not fund a trail that shares bridges with motorized vehicles. This is pretty much of a show stopper for us. I doubt that we would ever have the funds to build three new pedestrian /bike bridges, each 150 feet long. If we can’t share the bridges, we don’t have a trail. If we could use the bridges, we could have a four mile section of trail ready for use by the end of the year. This section is a key link in a trail across Carter County (about 30 miles).

Has anyone on the list had to deal with this issue already?

Here’s some links to photos of the bridges:

An I-beam would be added to support the outer edge of the walk-way (above the cross-hatched girder in the photo). The walkway would extend from the new I-beam to an existing timber (on the right in the photo) which runs along the edge of the vehicle roadway. The walkway would be raised 6-8 inches above the top of the timber.

<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kycarter/Rails_to_Trails/photo_gallery/Bridge_1_to_Goodale/slides/Fultz_to_Denton_022.html>

http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kycarter/Rails\_to\_Trails/photo\_gallery/Bridge\_3\_to\_Bridge\_2/slides/DSC00146\_bridge\_3c.html

http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~kycarter/Rails\_to\_Trails/photo\_gallery/Bridge\_3\_to\_Bridge\_2/slides/DSC00142\_west\_abutment\_of\_bridge\_3.html