



## Completion of the Foothills Parkway

Access to and within the National Park System has been a defining experience for generations of visitors.

The National Park Service (NPS) coordinates the planning and implementation of transportation systems that improve the visitor experience and care for national parks by:

- Preserving natural and cultural resources.
- Enhancing visitor safety and security.
- Protecting plant and animal species.
- Reducing congestion.
- Decreasing pollution.

NPS is committed to being a leader in pursuing strategies that can help make park units more enjoyable, cleaner, quieter, and more sustainable for present and future generations.

For more information, visit [nps.gov/transportation](http://nps.gov/transportation)

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*Congress authorized the Foothills Parkway as a scenic parkway on February 22, 1944. Of the seven Congressionally Mandated Parkways, the Foothills Parkway is the only remaining parkway yet to be completed. The entire 72-mile corridor is administered by Great Smoky Mountains National Park. However, only three segments totaling 22.5 miles are currently completed and open to the public.*

### Background

Between 1966 and 1970, a 6.4-mile section of road between U.S. Highway 321 in Walland and Carr Creek (Section 8F), was constructed.

In the 1980s, two contracts were awarded for construction of approximately 10 miles of road between Carr Creek and Wears Valley (Section 8E). Both projects experienced structural fill failures and erosion problems that caused the

projects to be suspended in 1989, thus leaving a 1.65-mile segment uncompleted. The uncompleted section is referred to as the “missing link.” In the 1990s, a new design was developed by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to complete the “missing link” using bridges, walls, and fills to minimize surface disturbance and environmental impacts.

### Current Status:

Since early 2000, the National Park Service (NPS) and FHWA have worked together to develop a plan to complete the “missing link.” Three bridges and two road segments have been completed for \$20.9 million and to date only 1.08 of the original 1.65 miles of the “missing link” remains to be constructed.

Projects are eligible for Title 23 funds from different programs such as Park Roads Parkway Program (PRPP), Public Lands Discretionary Program (PLHD), TEA-21 Section 1602, Project 352 and SAFETEA-LU High Priority Projects Codes 3093 and 4974. The Bridge 2 (FOOT 8E17) project received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding.



Construction of Bridge 2, scheduled for completion in August 2012. Completion of the “missing link” and the final paving project by 2016 is possible with appropriate funding and a very aggressive schedule.

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Construction of the Caylor Gap Road segment on the Foothills Parkway, looking to the west.

This project, design-build, was awarded in late 2009 for \$24,681,736 and will result in the construction of a 5-span, 790-foot bridge. The contract completion date is currently scheduled for August 5, 2012. Most recently, the remaining sections of the “missing link” were grouped in an attempt to complete construction by 2016. Bridges 3, 5, 6, 7, and the Caylor Gap road segment have been funded. Funding came from Title 23 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, PRPP, TEA-21 Earmarks and SAFETEA-LU earmarks. Total construction award is \$41,067,000.

## Funding:

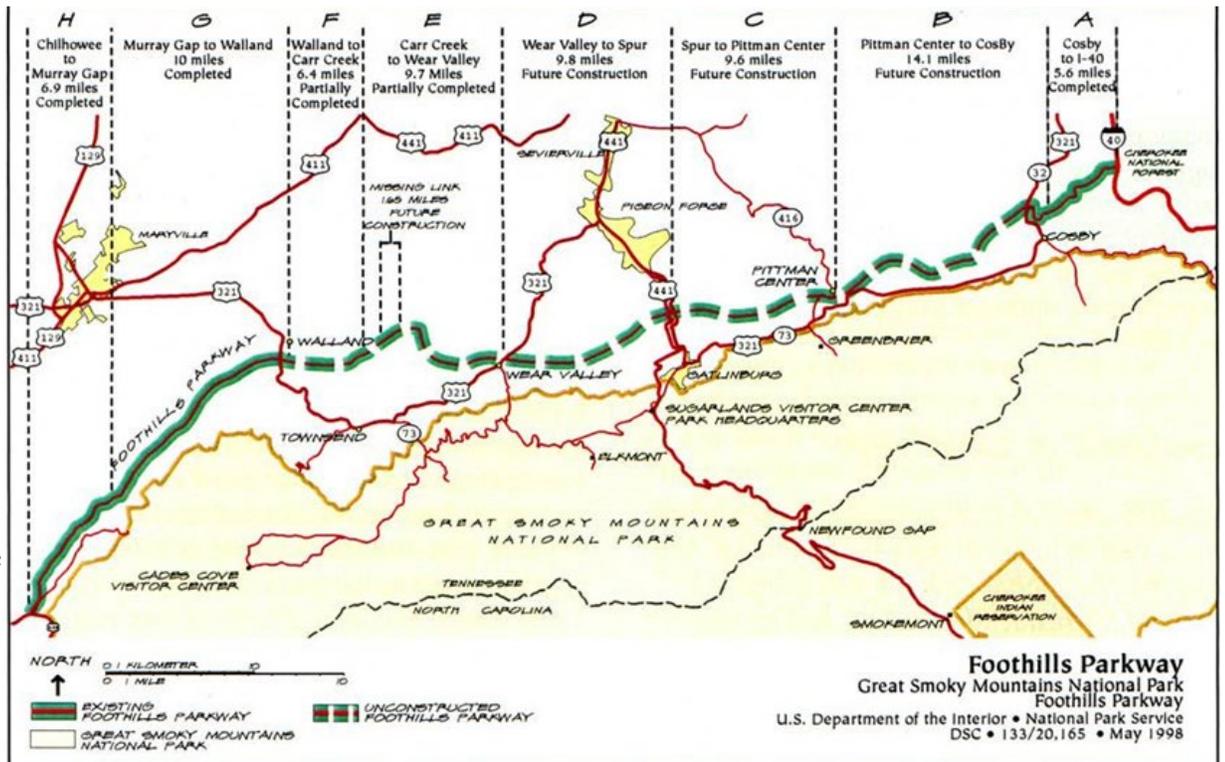
Funding for full completion of Sections 8E and 8F (including the “missing link”) is estimated to cost an additional \$36.5 million. This includes \$7.5 million for Bridge 4 and \$29 million for paving and

miscellaneous work to open the entire 16 miles (Sections E and F) from Wears Valley to Walland, TN.

The contract option for Bridge 4, that is part of the existing construction contract, can be exercised no later than June 30, 2012. In order to complete the entire “missing link” by the Centennial of the National Park Service in August of 2016, funds to award Bridge 4 need to be made available prior to June 30, 2012 and funds to pave the 16-mile paving project need to be made available beginning no later than the fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2013.

As part of the Transportation Reauthorization process for the Park Roads and Parkways Program, the NPS submitted a needs report, titled, “National Park Service Transportation Challenge, Reauthorization Resource Paper, December 2007,” accompanied by a cover letter from the Deputy Director, Operations, NPS to the Associate Administrator, Federal Lands Highway Program, FHWA

documenting the need to complete the “missing link.”



This map shows the segments of the entire Foothills Parkway reconstruction process.