



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
COMMERCE NEWS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE — WASHINGTON, D.C. 20230

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Tuesday, June 7, 2022

Contact: John Atwood
JAtwood@eda.gov

**U.S. Department of Commerce Invests \$2.6 Million in American Rescue Plan Funds for
Trailway Expansion to Boost Tourism in Southbridge, Massachusetts**

WASHINGTON – Today, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo announced that the Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) is awarding a \$2.6 million grant to Southbridge, Massachusetts, for construction of the Quinebau Valley Rail Trail. This grant is funded by the American Rescue Plan.

This project will support outdoor recreation and boost the local tourism industry by bringing new visitors to the city, its businesses, and local attractions. This EDA grant will be matched with \$1.5 million in local funds and is expected to create 45 jobs, retain 325 jobs and generate \$3.3 million in private investment, according to grantee estimates.

“President Biden’s American Rescue Plan delivers federal resources to communities to ensure our nation not only recovers from the pandemic, but builds a better America for the future,” **said Secretary of Commerce Gina M. Raimondo**. “This project will boost tourism and outdoor recreation in Southbridge while providing economic stability for the region.”

“The travel and tourism industry is an important part of many local economies across the country,” **said Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development Alejandra Y. Castillo**. “This EDA investment in Southbridge is an excellent opportunity to leverage a regional asset and build greater economic resiliency in the region’s growing outdoor recreation and tourism industry.”

“This \$2.6 million federal investment will fund the construction the Quinebau Valley Rail Trail, bringing visitors from across Worcester County and the Commonwealth to Southbridge to enjoy nature’s beauty and support our local businesses,” **said Senator Elizabeth Warren**.

“With so much to discover across the Commonwealth, this project unlocks the opportunity for travelers to explore all Southbridge has to offer,” **said Senator Edward J. Markey**. “This multi-million dollar investment into the local tourism industry will help create hundreds of jobs and boost Southbridge’s economic resiliency.”

“Thanks to the Biden Administration’s commitment to rebuilding our economy and with funds from the American Rescue Plan, the Town of Southbridge will be able to expand the Quinebaug Valley Rail Trail,” **said Congressman Richard E. Neal (MA-01)**. “Rail trails provide new recreation and tourism options, safe transportation alternatives, and enhance the quality of life for surrounding communities. Thanks to the Economic Development Administration’s continued support of outdoor recreation and congratulations to the Town of Southbridge.”

This project is funded under EDA’s \$240 million competitive American Rescue Plan [Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation program](#). EDA awarded \$510 million in 2021 to all 50 states and territories. The two programs are designed to accelerate the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism and outdoor recreation sectors. Effective May 26, 2022, EDA has officially closed all of its American Rescue Plan programs for applications. The \$3 billion program funding will be awarded on a rolling basis through September 30, 2022.

About the U.S. Economic Development Administration (www.eda.gov)

The mission of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) is to lead the federal economic development agenda by promoting competitiveness and preparing the nation’s regions for growth and success in the worldwide economy. An agency within the U.S. Department of Commerce, EDA invests in communities and supports regional collaboration in order to create jobs for U.S. workers, promote American innovation, and accelerate long-term sustainable economic growth.

###