



Oak Ridge receives \$800,000 grant to transform Jackson Square

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OAK RIDGE (WATE) - Gov. Bill Haslam on Friday announced a nearly \$800,000 grant to transform Jackson Square in Oak Ridge.

The \$798,687 transportation enhancement grant is for Phase I of the Jackson Square Townsite Reconfiguration Project. It includes major modifications to the parking lot on Broadway Avenue.

The project will transform the area into a landscaped plaza and parking area. Public sidewalks next to the area will be reconstructed and connected to new sidewalks in the landscaped plaza.

The project will also add park benches, bicycle racks, canopy trees and pedestrian lighting.

"The Jackson Square project will further Oak Ridge's efforts to enhance its historic downtown area and provide increased mobility and improved access to small businesses and cultural activities," Haslam said.

"Through Transportation Enhancement grants, TDOT has funded more than \$270 million in non-traditional transportation projects," said TDOT Commissioner John Schroer. "This program has assisted communities all over the state in their efforts to revitalize downtowns, highlight historic areas, provide alternative means of transportation, and increase opportunities for economic development."

City leaders are hoping the re-development of Jackson Square will lead to further economic activity in Oak Ridge, like at the mall, which is currently for sale.

"Investment follows investment. And so when the state of Tennessee comes to the table with a grant like this, it attracts private dollars to this area but it will also stimulate cross shopping into other places in town," said Oak Ridge Chamber of Commerce President Parker Hardy.

The grant is made possible through a federally funded program administered by TDOT.

A variety of activities such as the restoration of historic facilities, bike and pedestrian trails, landscaping and other non-traditional transportation projects are eligible for grant funds under the federal program.

6 News Reporter **JESSA LEWIS** contributed to this report.



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