

SLIDE 1: My name is Claire Parkey and I am a senior double majoring in historic preservation and philosophy. Over the course of the past year, I have been studying the preservation of urban and rural train depots through funding allocated from the Transportation Alternatives Set Asides. My research originally intended to look at inequalities in federal funding between urban and rural preservation projects, but as I dug deeper, I discovered that there are many things to learn from this dataset. This is an overview of my exploratory study of preservation through TASA funding.

SLIDE 2: The Railway is one of the most universal experiences of American history and progress throughout the continental United States. As a shared heritage, there is little else more treasured than transportation history, and the transcontinental railroad was the first major, uniquely American innovation in the field. Because of this, structures related to the operation and construction of the railroad are often objects of preservation efforts in both urban and rural areas. In terms of this study (a comparative analysis of urban and rural preservation funding as exemplified by TASA), depots are the best quantifiers for a variety of reasons: they are eligible for federal funding through the Transportation Alternatives Set-Asides fund, which is the largest pool of federal monies for which a preservation project may apply; they are centrally located in historic downtowns and are found across the continental US; and they are uniquely suited for reuse. They are accessible, easily modified, and are not limited by geographic or structural restrictions (like barns or bridges).

SLIDE 3: Established in 1992 to combat the negative effects of auto-centered development, the Transportation Alternatives Set Asides allocates funds apportioned by congress. It has existed as Transportation Enhancements, Transportation Alternatives Program, and currently, as the Transportation Alternatives Set Asides; as mentioned before, it is the largest pool of federal monies available for preservation purposes. Funds are allocated to State DOTs through a complex (and competitive) formula, the funds are then administered to localities through grant awarding processes by state offices. In theory, localities apply for a matching grant and promise to pay a certain percentage of the total project costs while the other portion is covered by federal funds. This is the method through which preservation projects are funded. Over the course of its existence, around 10% of all funds allocated went towards preservation projects. Out of 38,575 projects funded, 5,616 were preservation activities. Preservation projects eligible for TASA funds must be related to transportation structures or history. Over the years, the field of eligible activities has somewhat narrowed and condensed into a single category: section 6.

SLIDE 4: Data was compiled through consultation of the Transportation Alternatives Set-Asides Project Database, expanded through referencing National Register Nominations, State Department of Transportation records, and State Historic Preservation Office records. Barring this, local governments were contacted to confirm information. Quantitative analysis on the data included descriptives such as frequencies and cross tabulations. From these analyses, trends were isolated and studied. These trends were used to form criteria of success, or attributes that appear to contribute to the successful preservation of a depot in rural and urban contexts respectively. Application of these criteria to the case studies acted as a qualitative measure of

accuracy, and served to anchor the more abstract quantitative qualities of the data to substantial places and the practices undertaken to save them.

SLIDE 5: This chart represents all depot preservation projects funded by TASA over the course of its existence. As you can see, 38.7% of all projects funded were located in rural areas while 61.3% of all projects funded were located in urban areas. In theory, these two percentages should be equal, or close to it. In practice, there is a bigger difference than one may have initially expected.

SLIDE 6: This graph charts the funding awarded to depot projects in urban and rural areas respectively. As you can see, there isn't too much of a difference in the number of depots receiving the same amount of money until about the 400,000 dollar point. From this point upwards, the number of urban depots receiving that amount of money drastically surpasses the number of rural depots receiving that same amount of money. By the time we reach the 1,000,000 dollar point, urban depots are almost exclusively receiving more money than rural depots.

SLIDE 7: These two graphs show the treatment of depot preservation most popular in each area respectively. As you can see, the two most popular treatments are rehabilitation and restoration in both areas. However, rural depots are more often restored than rehabilitated and urban depots are more often rehabilitated than restored. You may note, however, that there was at least one depot that received funding in an urban area and was then destroyed. That none indicates that the site had no treatment applied to it whatsoever.

SLIDE 8: These graphs map the use of depots preserved with TASA funds. As you can see, museums are the most popular form of reuse across the nation. However, in urban areas, transportation uses are actually the most popular form of reuse for these buildings. So what that means is that in urban areas, these structures are more often used as what they were originally intended to be used. While there may need to be some small renovations made, they're still functioning as they were intended to function historically. On the other hand, in rural areas, these buildings are being used as town halls, or community centers or even as libraries. These are all centers of community building. In urban areas, these are more likely to be used for ways to collect revenue.

SLIDE 9: so these charts are mapping out singular vs multiuse in rural and urban areas respectively. So basically there's not really that much of a difference, however, rural depots are marginally more likely to be used for multiple uses rather than just one singular use.

SLIDE 10: so in terms of ownership, there isn't too much deviation. Most depots are publicly owned across the nation, however, rural depots are marginally more likely to be publicly owned while urban depots do see a greater variety of ownership.

SLIDE 11: My general statement of results: In terms of funding: after the five hundred thousand dollar point, urban depots are receiving WAY MORE MONEY than rural depots. Way more. Ridiculously more. Urban depots comprise almost 2/3rds of the depots preserved with tasa funds. Not only are they receiving more money, but there are more of them being funded in general. Rehabilitation and Restoration are the most popular methods of preservation, but restoration is more common in rural areas while rehabilitation is more common in urban areas. An overwhelming number of depots in urban areas are still being used as active train stations or transportation related activity; Museums are the most popular reuse otherwise. The percentages of multi vs single use are remarkably similar, indicating that it is often a toss up. Urban areas see more variety in ownership, while rural depots are generally publicly owned.

SLIDE 12: my conclusions and questions for further research: Federal funds are CRUCIAL to the success of a rural preservation project, maybe because the uses are not transportation based. They are rarely independently income-producing; instead they are utilized as administrative centers or centers for community enrichment. Rural communities, when they preserve these depots, use them as focal points of community building. If rural depots are not actively reused, then they are in serious danger of demolition or neglect. Urban areas can slip through the cracks and get away with mothballing projects for longer periods of time without the danger of active deterioration. Not only are more urban depots receiving money, but they are receiving MORE money overall. Furthermore, a few urban projects are totally funded by federal monies with no local matches. Some projects received preservation funding and then demolished the site. Where is the money going when it is not being applied towards the projects for which it was rewarded? There are many objects of further study within these discrepancies alone. Moreover, do private corporations need federal funds for these projects? Could they be better spent elsewhere? My study was for the most part exploratory, but it has indicated that this data has a wealth of information that should be analyzed further.

SLIDE 14: Moving on to the case studies: Virginia was removed from the data set, and random stratified sampling was performed to choose 5 urban and 5 rural depots from across the state. Data was gathered on these depots through TRADE database info, State DOTs, SHPOs, and National Register info + Virginia state landmarks, site visits, and interviews with locals. Sites were photographed and researched according to HABS standards. Depots are located in Orange, Pamplin, Tazewell, Brodnax, Cape Charles, Emporia, Harrisonburg, Winchester, Roanoke, and Bristol.

SLIDE 15: My rural depots were located in Orange, Pamplin, Tazewell, Brodnax, Cape Charles; while my five urban depots were located in Emporia, Harrisonburg, Winchester, Roanoke, and Bristol.

SLIDE 16: this is the depot in Winchester, VA. As you can see, the rail lines running in front of the building are still active. Theyre owned by CSX, as is the depot itself. Historically this would have been a passenger depot, it may have been a combination passenger and freight depot as well. You can still see the ticket window in front there. The building is actually really well preserved, there are no indications of additions or torn down sections; the inside doesn't look

too great but it still seems to have the original floor plan. The exterior as I said is in great condition, it's clear that CSX has the money to maintain the historic facade.

SLIDE 17: this is the depot in Bristol, VA. The rail lines running next to it are still active, though they only carry freight. Historically, it was a combination depot; it would have seen passengers and freight activity. Today it is used as an event venue. So urban depots, even when they are not actively or vigorously reused, they are often more well maintained as you can see in this case. It's a beautiful building, its been wonderfully preserved; it has retained so much of its historic integrity. There are actually diagrams of the time tables on the platforms where you can see the dates and times of arrival and departure on a specific day in the 1950s. It's really a lovely example of preservation in Virginia, especially in an urban area, but like I said, it is not really vigorously used.

SLIDE 18: in contrast, this is the depot in Broadnax, VA. It was a combination depot as well, as you can tell from the ticket window and freight bays. It did receive money from TASA for preservation, however, according to locals, no effort has been undertaken to save it. It's quickly falling into disrepair. The brick piers that make up the foundation are crumbling. It has suffered significant termite damage. The wood is rotting, and the roof has collapsed in some places. Rural depots, when they are not actively reused, fall into disrepair and run the risk of being demolished, whether it be from neglect or future development. This depot really illustrates that.

SLIDE 19: on a lighter note, this is Pamplin, VA. it's currently the town hall; it's also used as a community center. The farmer's market takes place in this area right here, It is very much the center of downtown, it's the heart of downtown. So it too was a combination depot, the rail lines behind it are still active, however, this has not deterred the city from very much actively reusing this building. They recently had a Christmas market right before this photo was taken; the garland and wreaths are still up. Rural depots, when they are reused, are well loved. When they are actively used by the community, they thrive. They're well preserved, they are taken care of. That community involvement is a key part of the success of rural preservation projects. Not to mention, federal funding.

SLIDE 20: In conclusion, the information within the TASA project database should be studied further by preservationists, whether it be for the purpose of advocacy or economics. Researching trends in this dataset in particular and all federal funding in general could improve the way we preserve our heritage. I'd like to express my gratitude to Jonathan Montgomery, Dr. Andrea Smith and her husband Dr. Benjamin Smith, and the faculty in the historic preservation department. Without their guidance, this project would not exist. To the audience, thank you for your time and attention. I would love to answer any questions you may have.