



# What's the Status of Federal Funding for Safe Routes to School, Walking, and Bicycling?

Safe Routes Partnership Webinar  
October 14, 2021



**HELLO**  
MY NAME IS

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*(she/her)*

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## **Disclaimer:**

**Information is accurate as of October 14, 2021. This is an evolving situation, and information presented is subject to change.**

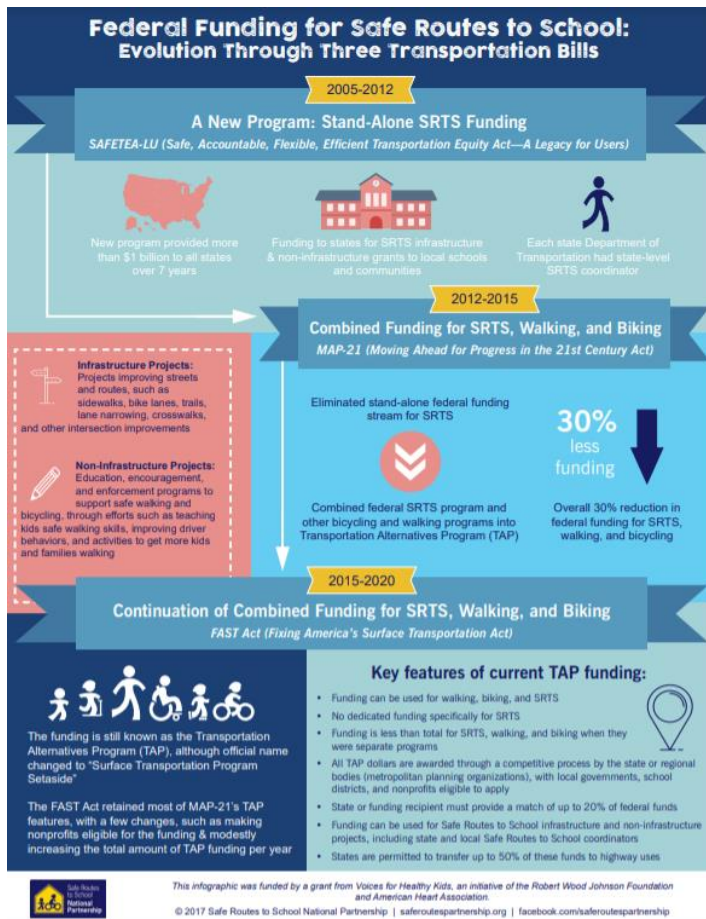


# Agenda

- FAST Act Recap
- Where things stand for surface transportation reauthorization
- Changes to federal policy and funding *when (if!)* surface transportation funding is reauthorized
- Brief overview of new/revised discretionary grant programs
- How to prepare for when/if this bill becomes law
- Questions and answers

\*Slide deck and recording will be shared following the webinar\*

# FAST Act Recap



- Federal surface transportation bill signed into law by President Obama in 2015
- Authorized funding through 2020
- Extended by Congress passing a continuing resolution (level policy/no funding changes) through September 30, 2021
- ~\$850 million annually for Transportation Alternatives

Disclaimer: Evolving situation. Information accurate as of 10/14/21.

<https://saferoutespartnership.org/safe-routes-school/101/history>



# What comes after the FAST Act?

- Congress lets the FAST Act expire
- Congress passes a continuing resolution to extend current funding levels and policy
- Congress reauthorizes surface transportation, and it is signed into law by President Biden



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*^^ has not yet happened ^^*



# The Politics of Infrastructure

## Physical Infrastructure

- Large-scale investment in public works
- AKA *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* or Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill
- Includes full text of *Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021*
- Passed the Senate in August 2021

## Human Infrastructure

- Investment in systems that support people
- AKA *Build Back Better Act*
- Partisan bill (Democrats only expected to support) that can only be passed through budget reconciliation
- Includes provisions aimed at combatting climate change, creating paid family leave, universal Pre-K, expands social safety net for families, Medicare expansion, and more

# The Politics of Infrastructure

## Physical Infrastructure

- House has agreed to accept the BIB as is in spite of having passed their own surface transportation reauthorization bill (INVEST)
- Speaker Pelosi will not bring the BIB to the House floor until BBB has passed the Senate or there is an agreed upon framework

## Human Infrastructure

- Centrist Senators oppose this as-written and must negotiate with their colleagues and House counterparts to determine a palatable topline cost
- House moderates oppose the linkage to the BIB





# What is in these bills for Safe Routes to School, Walking, and Bicycling?

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# Thank You to Sponsors and Committee Chairs

## Senate

- Transportation Alternatives bill sponsors: Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Roger Wicker (R-MS)
- Chairman of Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Senator Tom Carper (D-DE)

## House

- Safe Routes to School bill sponsor: Rep. Anthony Brown (D-MD-4)
- Safety bill sponsor: Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA-26)
- Transportation Alternatives bill sponsor: Rep. Adriano Espaillat (D-NY-13)
- Chairman of House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Representative Pete DeFazio (D-OR-4)



# Thank You to our Partner, the League of American Bicyclists



All of our lobbying work is done in strong partnership with the League of American Bicyclists



# What is in the BIB for Safe Routes to School, Walking, and Bicycling?

- **Safe Routes to School**
- **Transportation Alternatives**
  - Funding
  - Equity
  - Better access for local governments and local control
  - Facilitating state implementation and transparency
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program**
- **Discretionary grants**
  - Complete Streets
  - Reconnecting Communities
  - Safe Streets for All
  - RAISE

# Safe Routes to School



- Section 11119 brings Safe Routes to School into current law, with the exception that all projects can be done entirely with federal share
- There is no apportionment, so provisions like the clearinghouse will not be required
- Expands eligibility to high schools, in addition to elementary and middle schools
- **Conveys congressional support for the program**
- Allows up to 10% of HSIP funds to be used for safety campaigns/non-infrastructure, including Safe Routes to School



# Transportation Alternatives Program

- The major federal source of transportation funding for bicycling, walking, and Safe Routes to School
- Created in the transportation bill MAP-21 by merging 3 programs (Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements, and Recreational Trails)
- Also known as the “STP Setaside”
- Currently funded at \$850M / year
- Authorized by the FAST Act, extended through September 30, 2021 by continuing resolution in 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, **extended by continuing resolution through October 31, 2021**
- This program is designed to support local priorities
- State DOTs and MPOs must run competitions to choose projects
- Covers ~80% of project cost (requires local match)



# Transportation Alternatives



Our Ask	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>FUNDING</b>		
<b>Increase funding to 10% of STBG</b>	\$850M	\$1.38B – \$1.49B

- Funding levels have been fixed; now they are a percentage. The hope is that TAP will grow in proportion to other programs.
- **Funding would increase by 60%** to \$1.38 billion in 2022, and would increase each year up to \$1.49 billion in 2026.
- Across all five years, it would mean a **\$2.5 billion increase** for sidewalks, bike lanes, Safe Routes to School, and improvements to support walking and wheeling.

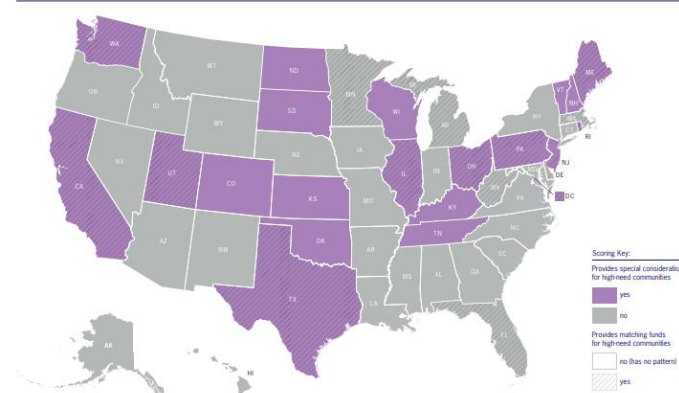
# Transportation Alternatives



Our Ask	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>EQUITY</b>		
<b>Require prioritization of high-need communities in project selection</b>	No	Included

- State DOTs will be required to states to prioritize high-need communities in the application process.
- States would define what constitutes high-need in their state—such as high-poverty schools or low-income or rural communities.

**FIGURE 3:**  
Special Consideration and Matching Funds for High Need Communities



# Transportation Alternatives



After taking out the Recreational Trails Set-Aside, the remaining TAP funds are divided within a state according to a funding formula that is set out in the FAST Act. The money is divided up this way to give communities of all sizes a chance to compete for TAP money.



**50%** of the remaining funds are awarded by the state DOT around the state.



**50%** of the remaining funds are awarded through competitions based on community size, with funds proportionately divided into the following pots based on population.



States can choose to transfer these funds away from walking and bicycling, for example, to highway projects.



State DOT-run competition for communities of any size anywhere in the state.



MPOs run competitions in urban areas over 200k population.



State DOT-run competition for communities with less than 5k pop (rural, small communities).



State DOT-run competition for communities with 5k-200k pop (mid-sized communities).

# Transportation Alternatives



Our Ask	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>BETTER ACCESS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS &amp; LOCAL CONTROL</b>		
<b>Increase population share from 50% to 66%</b>	50% State, 50% Population	41% State, 59% Population

- More money will be going out based on size of a community rather than in the statewide competition



# Transportation Alternatives



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# Transportation Alternatives



Our Ask	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>BETTER ACCESS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS &amp; LOCAL CONTROL</b>		
<b>Prevent states from transferring TAP without fair competition</b>	No	Included

- States will have to certify that they held a competition, including offering technical assistance, and there were no adequate projects before they can transfer funds to other uses

# Transportation Alternatives



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# Transportation Alternatives



Our Ask	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>BETTER ACCESS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS &amp; LOCAL CONTROL</b>		
<b>Allow states to suballocate all funds</b>	No	Included
<b>Allow large MPOs to obligate funding for projects they select</b>	No	Included
<b>Make small MPOs and all nonprofits eligible to compete</b>	No	Included

- Streamline project delivery by enabling large MPOs to obligate funds for projects they select rather than waiting for state to obligate the funds
- All nonprofits can apply for TAP funds as can small MPOs, who were previously excluded

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# Transportation Alternatives



Our Asks	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>FACILITATE STATE IMPLEMENTATION &amp; TRANSPARENCY</b>		
<b>Allow states flexibility in project matching amount (20% at project or program level)</b>	20% local match required for every project	Included
<b>Allow HSIP as a match for safety projects</b>	No	Included

- State DOTs have flexibility in meeting local match requirement. Average across all projects must be 20% (or state’s match %)
- HSIP can be used as a match for safety projects, which includes Safe Routes to School

# Transportation Alternatives



Our Asks	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>FACILITATE STATE IMPLEMENTATION &amp; TRANSPARENCY</b>		
<b>States can use 5% of TAP to provide technical assistance to applicants</b>	No	Included

- State DOTs can use up to 5% of their TAP apportionment to staff the program, provide technical assistance to applicants
- These funds can be used in-house to staff TAP or Safe Routes to School, or they can be contracted out to other government agencies, nonprofits, or contractors

# Transportation Alternatives



Our Asks	Current	IIJA (aka BIB)
<b>FACILITATE STATE IMPLEMENTATION &amp; TRANSPARENCY</b>		
<b>Require states to report list of funded projects – stage of project and other data helpful for tracking</b>	Includes bulk reporting	Included

- This change will enable comparison across states to support implementation tracking

# Highway Safety Improvement Program



- Integrates vulnerable road user safety by adding in provisions defining “safety for all road users”
- Adds in eligibility for traffic calming projects, bike lane and pedestrian separation
- **States can up to 10% of HSIP funds on safety campaigns/non-infrastructure including Safe Routes to School non-infrastructure**
- Makes Safe Routes to School infrastructure projects eligible for HSIP\*
- Requires states to complete vulnerable road user safety assessments
- **Requires states in which more than 15% of roadway fatalities are of vulnerable road users to spend at least 15% of HSIP funds to address vulnerable road user safety**

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# Discretionary Grants



- **Complete Streets:** states must develop Complete Streets standards and project prioritization lists, provides planning funds
- **Reconnecting Communities:** \$1B for pilot program for highway teardown in communities negatively impacted by highway construction
- **Safe Streets for All:** \$5B grant program through DOT to fund development and implementation of Vision Zero/Toward Zero Death plans\*
- **RAISE (Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity):** increased funding for RAISE (formerly BUILD and TIGER)

## Build Back Better + Walking, Bicycling, and Safe Routes to School



*Important note: the Build Back Better Act has not passed either chamber of Congress, and the House and Senate are actively negotiating how to cut the topline by almost half. We do not yet know if these programs will be included in the final version.*

- **Community Climate Incentive Grants**

This section provides \$4 billion to reduce surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

- Establishes a greenhouse gas performance measure
- Creates an incentive structure for states that demonstrate significant carbon reductions
- Includes \$950 million for incentive grants to states that make significant progress in reducing emissions or that adopt strategies to achieve net-zero surface transportation emissions by 2050 and \$3 billion for non-state entities for projects to reduce carbon emissions

## Build Back Better + Walking, Bicycling, and Safe Routes to School



- **Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants**

This section provides \$4 billion to support neighborhood equity, safety, and affordable transportation access.

- Builds on the \$1B Reconnecting Communities program included in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* to remove or reduce infrastructure barriers that divide communities.
- It goes further by allowing these competitive grants to be used for creating safe and accessible networks to mitigate barriers that cannot be removed.
- It sets aside funding to support equitable transportation planning, community engagement activities, and capacity building.
- It includes climate mitigation to reduce flooding and reduce the urban heat island effect that disproportionately affect low-income and communities of color, such as porous pavement and street trees as eligible uses of funds.
- Importantly, not less than 40 percent, or \$1.58 billion is set aside for projects in disadvantaged or underserved communities or in communities that have taken steps to ensure that projects do not lead to gentrification or displacement of existing residents.





# How to Prepare for When this Bill Becomes Law

- Eligibility for Transportation Alternatives program is not changing, so the same types of projects you've applied for in the past are still eligible, and now there will be significantly more funding available
- Encourage your state DOT to use HSIP as match for TAP
- Learn how state DOTs are currently defining "high need" communities and review research on practices that [Examining Practices that Promote Access to SRTS Programs in Vulnerable Communities](#)
- Consider what the best use of the 5% of technical assistance would be in your state
- Bicycling, walking, and Safe routes to School are eligible for many federal funding streams – get creative
- If working on a Vision Zero plan, apply for planning funding in early years



# Resources for Tracking Federal Policy on Safe Routes to School, Walking and Wheeling

- Safe Routes Partnership [federal policy blog](#)
- Transportation Alternatives [State Implementation Tracking](#)
- Transportation Alternatives Project Lists
  - Contact us for information on TAP projects (excluding recreational trails) that have been funded in your community.
- Biannual [state report cards](#) on walking, bicycling, and physical activity
- Email me - [marisa@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:marisa@saferoutespartnership.org)

# Questions?



We're here to help!



[Marisa@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:Marisa@saferoutespartnership.org)