



WHEN AMERICA BIKES AMERICA BENEFITS

Transportation
Authorization Priorities

by **AMERICA BIKES**

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identification purposes only.

STAFF
Caron Whitaker
Campaign Director
1612 K Street, NW Suite 802
Washington, DC 20006
202-223-3726
202-223-3181 (fax)
caron@americabikes.org



**Adventure
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Bikes Belong
COALITION
Putting More People On Bicycles More Often



Transportation Authorization Priorities

As the 111th Congress prepares to write new transportation legislation, Americans are increasingly searching for personal solutions to tight family budgets, rising health costs and time wasted in traffic. As a society, we are facing monumental challenges relating to climate change, pollution and oil dependence. Despite a small current investment of resources, bicycling and walking already account for 10 percent of all trips made by Americans, and the potential clearly exists to double that share. Forty percent of all trips in the United States are just two miles or less and yet the vast majority are made by car. These short car trips are the most polluting and energy intensive as well as the easiest to shift to bicycling and walking.

An investment of just 3 percent of the next transportation bill in bicycling and walking will enable our nation to move decisively towards a goal of increasing the share of trips taken by these modes from 10 percent to 20 percent. Such a shift from driving to bicycling and walking will provide tens of billions of dollars per year in economic, health, tourism, energy, environmental, safety, and congestion-relief benefits. Recreational cycling is extremely popular (84 million participants 2004) and growing and this small investment will help Americans use their bicycles for transportation as well as exercise.

America Bikes asks Congress to enact a federal transportation law that meets these challenges and measures progress in terms of cost effectiveness, clean air, energy independence and job creation as well as safe, healthy, and effective transportation choices. Many Americans have limited transportation options; equity requires providing viable bicycle/pedestrian/transit/trail networks for more Americans.

On behalf of our 300,000 members and the tens of millions U.S. cyclists, America Bikes urges Congress to adopt the following measures.



America Bikes wants Congress to enact a federal transportation law that meets the challenges and measures progress in terms of cost effectiveness, clean air, energy independence and job creation as well as safe, healthy, and effective transportation choices.



Complete the Streets



- 1.** Enact a National Complete Streets policy that ensures all new and reconstructed roads are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit users, of all ages and abilities. America Bikes urges Congress to:
- 2.** Establish a Complete Streets policy requiring that all road projects that utilize federal funds shall include appropriate provisions to accommodate bicyclists, pedestrians, and disabled travelers.
 - The policy should apply to all federal, state and local recipients of funds authorized under Titles 23 and 49, including National Park roads and federal land management agencies.
 - Ensure adequate and frequent safe crossing of corridors, such as highways, railroads and rivers, where pedestrian and bicycle travel are prohibited.
 - Where no options exist to create a complete street, improve and mark an alternative or parallel route nearby.
 - Re-write Section 109(m) to ensure no existing roadways and facilities open to bicyclists can be closed or severed.
 - Strengthen requirements to provide bicycle and pedestrian access to bridges when they are built or rebuilt.
 - Exceptions to this requirement should follow the Federal Highway Guidance on bicycle and pedestrian travel where there is demonstrably no need (e.g., sidewalks in rural areas).
- 3.** Build Complete Transit Systems. Require all projects involving the construction or reconstruction of transit stations to include appropriate provisions to accommodate bicycles, bicyclists and pedestrians (including persons with disabilities) to ensure a seamless connection between the different modes. Sidewalks should connect transit stations



with neighborhoods and bus stops, and bicyclists should be able to get to transit stations and stops, and park their bicycles securely. New transit vehicles should enable bicyclists to take their bicycles with them on the vehicle with a minimum of delay or inconvenience.

4. Incentivize the adoption of state, MPO and local complete streets policies. Possible mechanisms include:
 - A special funding source available only to jurisdictions with complete streets policies.
 - Redirecting a portion of funding (such as STP) to bicycle and pedestrian safety for jurisdictions which do not enact Complete Streets policies.
 - Inclusion of complete streets in any new performance measure or accountability provisions included in the new authorization.
5. Enact an FHWA Complete Streets standard that sets a minimum accommodation requirement as well as guidelines for target levels of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. Incentivize performance based on this new standard.

“We have very real challenges facing our country, and they are all interwoven. We now know that we must change our environmental and energy policy, and reduce our impact on the planet. By opening up our roadways to pedestrians and cyclists, we can help ease the congestion on our nation’s roads,”

— REPRESENTATIVE DORIS MATSUI, at the introduction of the Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2008, H.R. 5951

“We need to design our streets for everybody out there, not just motorists. All these things are coming together to create momentum for making our streets safer places for people to walk.”

— STEPHEN VANCE, Senior Regional Planner for the San Diego Association of Governments, in *USA Today*



La Jolla Blvd. in San Diego transformed under the Complete the Streets policy.
TOP: before. BOTTOM: after.



1. Washington
2. Wisconsin
3. Arizona
4. Oregon
5. Minnesota
6. Maine
7. California
8. Illinois
9. New Jersey
10. New Hampshire
11. Utah
12. Michigan
13. North Carolina
14. Hawaii
15. South Carolina
16. Massachusetts
17. Vermont
18. Wyoming
19. Nevada
20. Florida
21. Iowa
22. Colorado
23. Virginia
24. Indiana
25. Kansas
26. Louisiana
27. Rhode Island
28. Missouri
29. Kentucky
30. Texas
31. Delaware
32. Ohio
33. Nebraska
34. New York
35. Maryland
36. Tennessee
37. Idaho
38. Pennsylvania
39. Arkansas
40. Alaska
41. South Dakota
42. Connecticut
43. Oklahoma
44. Montana
45. New Mexico
46. North Dakota
47. Mississippi
48. Alabama
49. Georgia
50. West Virginia

Ranking the States

As part of the expansion of programming in 2008, the Bicycle Friendly State program fills the gap between our federal level advocacy and work with communities throughout the country. The League and advocates must address legislation, policies and funding at the state level order to truly build a Bicycle Friendly America. The Bicycle Friendly State Program is a two-part recognition program that ranks and recognizes states that actively support bicycling.

States are ranked from first to fiftieth based on their level of bicycle friendliness. The scoring is based on responses to a 75-item questionnaire evaluating a state's commitment to bicycling and covers six key areas: legislation; policies and programs; infrastructure; education and encouragement; evaluation and planning; and enforcement. These state rankings were first conducted in 2008 and will be conducted annually, with questions and methodology remaining consistent to track progress.

States that wish to apply for a Bicycle Friendly State designation can receive further recognition and promotion of their efforts; as well as feedback, technical assistance, training and further encouragement to improve their bicycling legislation, projects, and programs. A Bicycle Friendly State promotes cycling through legislation, policies, programs and by creating new places to ride — educating motorists and cyclists and encouraging people to bike for transportation and recreation.



Build Active Transportation Systems

Focus significantly increased investment on completing seamless networks of sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails, especially in cities, towns and suburban areas. These networks should be accessible and safe for all users, and connect pedestrians and bicyclists to improved public transportation services to enable many more short trips to be made by foot and bicycle. Therefore, America Bikes urges Congress to:

1. Create a new Active Transportation Investment Fund to support concentrated investment in completing active transportation systems in urban and metropolitan areas with the goal of shifting driving trips to walking and bicycling. Building on the success of the non-motorized pilot program in SAFETEA-LU (sec. 1807), the fund should give large grants and flexible decision-making to local governments with the expectation that they will achieve measurable mode shift.
2. Support the recognition and implementation of an official United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS), based on the national corridor plan adopted by AASHTO, to connect urban, suburban and rural areas in America by inter-state and inter-city routes on roads and trails.
3. Maintain and enhance funding for existing programs to encourage investment and extend or complete bicycle, trail and pedestrian networks:

Transportation Enhancements

- If the Surface Transportation Program (STP) program is maintained, Transportation Enhancements (TE) shall continue as a 10 percent set-aside with the existing funding categories and without funds being transferable to other programs.
- If the STP program structure is not maintained, new and explicit funding for bicycle and pedestrians in every state, similar to those funded under the current TE program shall be maintained.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

- If the CMAQ program is maintained, ensure that funds authorized for the CMAQ program are increased relative to the number of metropolitan areas made eligible by the new stricter air quality standards.
- Require programming processes where bicycle and pedestrian projects are fairly considered.
- If the CMAQ program is not maintained, it must be replaced with a larger environmental, air quality or climate program where at least 10% of funding would go to bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Recreational Trails Program

- Increase funding for the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) to \$550 million over five years, increasing from \$90 million in the first year to \$130 million in year five.
- Improve trail production and delivery by: exempting dirt trails from some highway and bridge planning processes, working more with youth and conservation corps, bolstering the educational component and how trail projects maximize the use of volunteer labor, and tracking the non-highway recreational fuel use regularly for funding accountability.



Forty percent of all trips in the United States are just two miles or less and yet the vast majority are made by car. These short car trips are the most polluting and energy intensive as well as the easiest to shift to bicycling and walking.



Parks

- Increase funding to Paul S. Sarbanes Alternative Transit in the Parks Program (PSSATPP), and ensure funds are eligible for bicycling infrastructure including but not limited to: bicycle lanes, paths and trails, bike parking, bike racks on busses, and signage.
- Expand authorities to ensure that road bridge and pathway maintenance can be funded through the Parks, Roads and Parkway Program of the Federal Lands Highway Program.

4. Bicycle and pedestrian projects should be expedited to maximize benefits and avoid rescissions of funding. Any rescissions of transportation funds should not disproportionately reduce funding for bicycle and pedestrian programs.
5. Align Transportation and Climate Policy: Federal transportation policies have inadvertently fueled growth of greenhouse gas emissions by facilitating long-term growth in vehicle miles traveled. The transportation bill should support the nation's need to reduce CO₂ by prioritizing transportation projects that will reduce these emissions. It should set CO₂ reduction goals for the sector and incorporate performance-based reduction targets and accountability mechanisms into transportation planning and project selection processes. Further, climate change legislation should direct substantial cap and trade revenues to supplement funding for low- and no-carbon modes of transportation as a necessary means to meet the climate challenge.
6. Establish an ACTIVE Transportation InnoVative and Experimental (ACTIVE) Design program to enhance the ability of communities to develop solutions to increase non-motorized travel, and to evaluate the relative effectiveness of design features funded by the program. The ACTIVE Design program would be a competitive fund, administered through a University Transportation Center with expertise in bicycling and walking innovation focused on developing new roadway, intersection, and trail designs, and applying international experience in the U.S. context.



Fair Share for Safety

Require highway safety funds to be spent in proportion to fatalities. Currently, bicyclists and pedestrians account nationally for 13 percent of the fatalities on our roadways, but less than one percent of safety funding is spent on improvements to make roads safer for bicyclists and pedestrians.

America Bikes urges Congress to:

1. Include explicit funding in both the Highway Safety Improvement Program and Section 402 Highway Safety Funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
 - The amount set aside should be proportional to the percentage of fatalities by state.
 - Because serious and fatal pedestrian and bicycle crashes are often dispersed throughout an area as opposed to being concentrated at a specific location, the HSIP or its replacement must have the ability to evaluate and select community-wide projects.
2. Reauthorize the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program at a substantially higher level to reflect the extraordinary demand for the SAFETEA-LU SRTS program. Retain current goals and split between infrastructure and non- infrastructure, but improve the program by:
 - Including high schools,
 - Simplifying project delivery and funding mechanisms.
 - Ensuring a fair balance of funding to all types of communities including urban, rural and suburban schools districts.



What are the Benefits from Bicycling and Walking?

For more information and to download the full report, please visit: www.railstotrails.org/atfa

In October 2008 Rails-to-Trails Conservancy published a new, cutting edge report, "Active Transportation for America". It quantifies benefits from current and future levels of bicycling and walking in the United States. Currently, active transportation (bicycling and walking) accounts for 10% of all trips, generating benefits worth at least four billion dollars every year. The report provides an analysis of the economic value of increasing the active transportation mode share to 13% (under a modest scenario) and 25% (substantial scenario). Compared to the current level of federal investment in bicycling and walking, approx. \$500 million per year, the potential benefits nationwide are enormous - between \$10 billion and \$66 billion every year under the two future scenarios - justifying a substantial increase in federal investments in active transportation.

FACTOR OF INTEREST	Status Quo	Modest Scenario	Substantial Scenario
Avoided driving (billion miles per year)	23.0	69.0	199.0
Fuel savings (billion gallons per year)	1.4	3.8	10.3
CO ₂ emission reductions (million tons per year)	12.0	33.0	91.0
Physical activity (average daily minutes per person)	3.0	5.0	9.0
Monetary value of the above benefits (\$ billion per year)	4.1	10.4	65.9



Promote Bicycling and Walking

Elevate the role of bicycling and walking within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). Ensure accountability in transportation funding by including tools and research to measure progress in increasing the share of trips taken by bicycling and walking. America Bikes urges Congress to:

- 1.** Create an entity in the Department of Transportation (DOT) that has the authority and adequate resources to effectively administer DOT bicycling and walking programs and policies, and to coordinate with other Federal agencies.
- 2.** Require data collection of comparable frequency and scope for all modes of transportation. Direct the Secretary to address the need for bicycle and pedestrian data by funding a national data collection program. This program would: (1) establish a consistent national bicycle and pedestrian count and survey methodology to assess levels, trends and safety of bicycling and walking; (2) establish a national database of bicycle and pedestrian information generated by these consistent methods and practices; (3) provide funding to communities to conduct data collection; and (4) analyze the collected data to inform planning and policy.
- 3.** Codify bicycling and walking as modes of transportation; define a bicyclists' right to the road; and ensure adequate legal protection extends to pedestrians and bicyclists in the event of crashes.
- 4.** Simplify and expedite the review process for smaller bicycle and pedestrian projects. Develop a streamlined project development process that reflects the substantial positive environmental and social impacts of bicycling and pedestrian projects and the negligible negative impacts of these projects.
- 5.** Require proponents of federally funded transportation projects greater than \$50 million to assess:
 - Public health impacts and evaluate whether there are alternatives that better balance mobility needs and health outcomes.
 - Climate impacts and evaluate whether there are alternatives that could reduce CO2 emissions.



- Impacts on bicycling and walking since many projects (such as road and intersection widening) add hazards for these users. Require complete streets mitigation where negative impacts are predicted.
- 6. Require that not less than \$35 million a year be spent on education and encouragement activities to increase levels of bicycling and walking and improve safety.
- 7. Remove confusing language in 23 U.S.C. Section 217 that bicycle projects must be “principally for transportation, rather than recreation, purposes.” This distinction does not exist for any other mode of travel, and ignores that social, recreational and family-related travel accounts for the majority of all trips, regardless of mode.
- 8. Promote bicycling and walking expertise at the state and local level, by
 - Requiring each state to have at least, but not limited to, one full-time bicycle and pedestrian coordinator.
 - Recommending that cities hire a local bicycle/pedestrian coordinator and convene a strong bicycle/pedestrian advisory committee.



Conclusion

In survey after survey, Americans confirm that they want a more balanced transportation system in which bicycling and walking — working in tandem with public transportation- are given higher priority, and that they want expanded opportunities for bicycling more than they want new or bigger roads. For example, a 2007 national survey showed that Americans would allocate 22 percent of transportation dollars to bike paths, trails and sidewalks while cutting by more than 50 percent the share of funds dedicated to roads.

Americans want to live in communities where bicycling is safe and convenient. Americans know the dividends from bicycling and walking for individuals, communities, and the nation as a whole are potentially enormous.

Perhaps most importantly, Americans recognize that a meaningful shift from driving to alternative modes of travel is needed to help meet our pressing public health, climate change, economic development and energy independence goals. Implementing the America Bikes agenda in the next transportation bill is a critical first step.

When America bikes, America benefits.

“Congress can capitalize on the promise of the bicycle to make our communities more livable and our families safe and healthier and more economically secure.”

—Congressman Earl Blumenauer
(OR-03)





America Bikes
americabikes.org
1612 K Street, NW, Suite 802
Washington DC 20006
Phone 202-223-3726
Fax 202-223-3181

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