FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND THE TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

North Carolina Alliance for Health Quarterly Membership meeting, June 1

Margo Pedroso Deputy Director Safe Routes to School National Partnership
FEDERAL POLICY: THE BIG PICTURE

• Historically, less than 20% of federal transportation funding is for transit and 1% for biking/walking. The result?

• Car-centric communities
  ▪ 25% of trips are 1 mile or less, but 90% taken by car
  ▪ In 2009, just 38% of children living within 1 mile of school walk or bicycle; down from 88% in 1969.

• Lack of safe alternatives to the car
  ▪ Missing or disconnected sidewalks, no bike lanes and paths
  ▪ Not enough public transit
  ▪ High-speed traffic on high-volume roads
  ▪ Bike/ped is 12% of trips but 16% of traffic deaths
FEDERAL POLICY: MAP-21

• MAP-21 was last transportation bill, passed in 2012
  • Only 2 years in length due to funding shortfall
  • Focus on consolidating programs, increasing state flexibility and reducing red tape

• Big fight over funding for biking and walking
  • Bridges are falling down; can’t afford “niceties” of bike paths…
  • We shouldn’t force states to spend money on this when they have other priorities…
  • Bikers and pedestrians don’t pay a gas tax; we should only spend gas tax money on roads/bridges…
  • Sidewalks and bike paths are a local transportation issue and shouldn’t be part of the federal program…
TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM

• MAP-21 consolidated 3 programs into the new Transportation Alternatives Program
  • Safe Routes to School program - $202 million
  • Transportation Enhancements program - $928 million
  • Recreational Trails program - $97 million

• Key changes:
  • Less funding – 30% cut; requires local match
  • Changes in eligibilities
  • States can transfer 50% of TAP funding
  • Regions (MPOs) and states share decision-making
  • Requires competitive process
  • “Local control” was major selling point
HOW TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES WORKS

State’s TAP allocation

Minus: Recreational Trails (FY09 level) *unless Governor opts out

Half goes to “Population pot”
- Distributed by population share
- Large MPOs (200k or up) get a share to distribute by regional competition
- With remainder, state runs a competition to fund projects in rural areas (5k or less) and mid-sized areas (5k-200k)

Half goes to “Unrestricted pot”
- Distributed by state competition
- Variety of local entities eligible; state DOT not eligible
- States can transfer all this money away to roads
- States can also use road funds to transfer into this pot
## EXAMPLE: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES IN OREGON

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total TAP funding for Oregon</td>
<td>$8.96M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAP after Rec Trails setaside</td>
<td>$7.6M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot 1 - Population</td>
<td>$3.8M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland (39% population)</td>
<td>$1.4M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salem (6% population)</td>
<td>$227K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eugene (6.5% population)</td>
<td>$238K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of state</td>
<td>$1.9M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pot 2 – Unrestricted (could be transferred out)</td>
<td>$3.8M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TAP IMPLEMENTATION STATUS**

- Because TAP is a new program, states have been slow to get started
  - But, most states and MPOs are now moving on application processes
- Provides more “local control” for mayors and MPOs to make project decisions
  - 180+ MPOs control $200M of TAP/year
- Advocates can:
  - Hold your state DOT’s feet to the fire – don’t transfer funding and get the awards moving
  - Learn your MPO deadlines and processes
  - Submit great projects!
THE NEXT TRANSPORTATION BILL

• New reauthorization is necessary….but the Highway Trust Fund is broke again:
  ▪ Gas tax produces $13-18B less / year than current level
  ▪ Congress has to find money just to extend transportation
  ▪ Tax committees not engaged
  ▪ Several ideas (raise gas tax, cut spending, repatriation, commission, more oil/gas exploration) but no consensus
REAUTHORIZATION: TIMELINE

• MAP-21 policy AND funding expires July 31st
  ▪ Congress extended it 2 months from May 31; wanted longer but couldn’t agree
  ▪ Likely to be extended again till late in the year

• Even so, policy decisions are being made
  ▪ Senate Committee could mark up bill in June
  ▪ Both committees are having hearings

• Appears that bike/ped is less controversial this year
HOW YOU CAN HELP

• Let your Members of Congress know that you support the Transportation Alternatives Program

• Speak to your local needs and benefits
  • Economic development and property values
  • Quality of life and transportation options
  • Safety for kids and families
  • Cost-effectiveness
  • Public health

• Come armed with local stories – where these investments are needed or where they have helped

• Ask Senate office to cosponsor S. 705, the Transportation Alternatives Program Improvement Act
OTHER FEDERAL PRIORITIES

• Federal Complete Streets Policy (HR 2071)
• Vision Zero funding (HR 1274)
• Getting more transportation safety funding (HSIP) to the local level
• Securing a safety performance measure to reduce bike/ped fatalities and injuries
FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Margo Pedroso, Safe Routes to School National Partnership

margo@saferoutespartnership.org

www.saferoutespartnership.org