

## Dec 14, 2011 – Community Spokes Advocacy Project

**Your Assignment:** Help save dedicated funding for biking and walking in 2012 and beyond by getting local leaders to reach out to our Maine Senators. Your help “on the ground” will be critical.

### Background on Congress and Transportation Funding

Congress authorizes transportation funding for the states. The reauthorization is supposed to happen every 6 years but that has not happened for a while. (In fact, there have been 8 short-term extensions of funding since Sept 2009. We are currently in a 6 month extension period, that was passed in late September and will expire on March 31<sup>st</sup>.)

The Senate released a draft Transportation Reauthorization bill, (“Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” or MAP21) in early November. The bill was met by a collective groan from bike/ped advocates all over the country because:

- The bill does not include **dedicated** funding for bicycling and walking.
- All of the programs that fund bike/ped projects and programs--Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and the Recreational Trails Program (RTP)-- have been moved into one pot of funding—called CMAQ – Additional Activities--along with many other uses, including road building and environmental mitigation.\*
- Biking and walking projects will have to compete with more uses — and there is less money.
- Finally, there is an opt-out for states that encourages DOTs to hold on to the money and not spend it.

*When there is no dedicated funding for bike/ped, state DOT's tend NOT to spend transportation dollars on those areas. Similarly, in the past when there was dedicated funding for bike/ped, if you didn't spend it, you couldn't use it on other areas, (e.g., bridges or highways.) The new opt-out will allow you to spend those monies elsewhere.*

***Our efforts will hopefully serve to restore dedicated to MAP-21 and remove the opt-out provision.***

Congress is closer to actually finishing a transportation bill than it has been at any time over the past two years. If we see a bill in both the House and the Senate, we will have to win an amendment on the Senate floor in order to have a chance at saving dedicated funding. If there is no bill, Congress will likely pass a longer-term extension into 2013. Either way there will be debate about the content of those bills. For example, before the September extension vote, Senator Coburn (Oklahoma, R) threatened to filibuster the vote unless TE money was eliminated. In October, Senator Rand Paul (Kentucky, R) proposed that TE moneys be spent on bridges.

### **Current Dedicated Funding for bike/ped:**

In Maine, we have had 3 main pots of funding:

#### **1. Transportation Enhancements (TE):** <http://www.enhancements.org/>

“federally funded, community-based projects that expand travel choices and enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of our transportation infrastructure. TE projects must be one of 12 eligible activities and must relate to surface transportation.”

*Eligible activities include bike/ped infrastructure, Bike/ped Safety Education, conversion of Rail to Trail.*

2011: Maine received \$7,635,39 in TE funding (around \$700 million was spent on biking and walking in US, or less than 2% of federal transportation funds)

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\* On **Nov 8**, Senator Boxer got bipartisan support for an amendment that will remove all but one of the road uses.

1999-2011: TE funding totally \$37,568,276 was spent in Maine.

TE has been the primary funding source for the past 20 years for bike lanes, trails, bike racks on buses, bike education etc.

List of some Maine projects funded with TE in past 4 years: <http://www.bikemaine.org/what-we-do/te-projects-in-maine>

## 2. Safe Routes to School:

\$1m/year: 10% is spent on encouragement, 90% is spent on infrastructure. Both work to make it easier for kids to bike/walk to school. Over 100 schools in Maine participate in SRTS activities. Nine infrastructure projects were funded in 2011.

## 3. Recreational Trails Program: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/index.htm>

“The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non- motorized and motorized recreational trail uses... Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.”

Maine:

2010: 1,544,050.00

2011: 1,948,983

2012: \$841,405

## National Advocates Bike/Ped Strategy that we are part of

To ensure that in March we have 60 votes — enough to override a filibuster — we will need to solidify existing supporters, **and build consistent support of ‘swing’ Senators. This will require increased visibility of support for, and the benefits of, federal funding for biking and walking in Senators’ home states.**

Senators Snowe and Collins have always supported bike/ped funding in the past; however, as Republicans, in March, they will be under a lot of pressure to vote with their party, even if that means they vote against dedicated bike/ped funding. If there is a filibuster, every vote will be very important!

Since we don’t know yet what the final bill will look like, at this point we are at the education/communication phase. We need to actively communicate with our Senators to keep biking and walking on their radar.

## What we need Community Spokes to do:

Contact your mayor or other elected official and/or a prominent business or community person and ask if they will either sign-on your letter of support for dedicated funding for bicycling and walking OR write their own letter of support to Snowe and Collins (best).

Any letter should include that you hope the final bill will restore dedicated funding and remove the opt-out option.

***We will provide updates about the bill as we get them. We will also provide a standard letter that you can work from.***

## **Other activities that will help:**

### 1. Media outreach

- Editorial support for pro-walk / pro-bike policy changes and funding decisions
- Op-Eds authored by prominent local elected officials, business leaders, or celebrities
- Positive media coverage for ribbon-cuttings, ground-breakings, project/plan/program launches and/or legislative victory
- Positive media coverage for a show-me event/tour or award for your Senator or other local leaders

### 2. Show-me events

- Senators or Representatives (and/or their staff) walking or biking in the community, on federally funded projects
- Local elected officials and business leaders involved as participants or as hosts

### 3. In-district meetings

- Face-to-face policy discussion with Senators or staff seeking support for the America Bikes platform
- Include bike retailer/industry representatives, and local elected officials as participants

### 4. Visible displays of support

- Resolutions by local agencies in support of dedicated funding, complete streets, Safe Routes, etc.
- Letter of support from mayors or prominent business people
- Sign-on letters by local elected officials, business leaders, university presidents, safety celebrities, prominent local people urging support for dedicated funding for bicycling and walking
- Invitations from business leaders (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs) to Senators/Reps for events, meetings to discuss bike/walk funding and policy issue

### 5. National Bike Summit participation

- At least one resident from high-priority districts — ideally resident, business owner and elected official from each
- In hard-to -fill districts, summit scholarships will be made available

### 6. Coordination with the business interests

- An invite for business leaders to attend a show-me event or host an event showcasing job creation in your state
- A joint in-district meeting