



Get Involved with Advocacy

Material courtesy League of American Bicyclists (www.bikeleague.org)

In recent years, the need for safe cycling and walking facilities has received an increasing amount of attention. Advocacy groups and individuals have banded together to encourage local, state, and federal agencies to pass measures that improve facilities and enhance the safety of cyclists and pedestrians. A number of bills related to transportation and safe, livable communities are pending in Congress. Get involved – and ask your Congressional representatives to support them!

The information contained in this article was provided by the League of American Bicyclists. Participants in the 2010 National Bike Summit used this material to prepare for their meetings on Capitol Hill. It is an excellent summary of the issues and the ways in which the bills will address those issues. Each summary is accompanied by a “National Bike Summit Ask”, which is what the bicycling industry and advocates are asking you to ask your Congressperson. *Note: the number of co-sponsors for each bill was current as of publication. For updated information, including the list of sponsors, please visit <http://capwiz.com/lab/issues/bills/>.*

HR 4722 - Active Community Transportation Act of 2010

Half of all trips in the United States are three miles or less, and in our cities, 30 percent of all trips are just one mile or less – yet the vast majority of even these very short trips are made by car. Shifting more of these to biking and walking could dramatically, and economically, reduce congestion, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and our dependence on foreign oil and improve physical activity, safety and livability.

Unfortunately, most people are unwilling to bike or walk because they don't feel it is safe or convenient to do so. While we have improved the bicycle-friendliness and walkability of many communities, there are too many disconnected and incomplete networks of streets and highways to effectively accommodate active transportation modes.

Key Facts and Figures

- Bicycling and walking comprise 12 percent of all trips, up 25 percent since 2001 – but less than 1.5 percent of Federal funds are spent on these active transportation modes.
- Commuting by bicycle has increased 43 percent since 2000 – and by 69 percent in designated Bicycle Friendly Communities that have invested in infrastructure improvements.

Status

The current transportation bill has limited funding opportunities for concentrated investment in active community transportation that will achieve a mode shift to bicycling and walking.



H.R. 4722, The Active Community Transportation Act of 2010, was introduced by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and currently has 26 co-sponsors. The bill would:

- Provide concentrated investment for communities to complete active transportation networks through a competitive grant program administered by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation.
- Create an Active Transportation fund within the Surface Transportation Program with \$400 million a year for five years – equivalent to just 0.5 percent of the estimated funding level of the next transportation bill.
- Target funds to local or regional government organizations with active transportation plans and demonstrated local support. Communities would be eligible to receive \$5 million to \$15 million per year for up to five years.

National Bike Summit Ask

Please request that your Representative co-sponsor H.R. 4722. Please thank them if they have already done so.

Additional Information

- Bicycling for all purposes is growing across the country, having increased 25 percent since 2001. Bicycle commuting is up 43% since 2000.
- Bicycle Friendly Communities' commuter share grew 69 percent, compared to a 23 percent increase for non-Bicycle Friendly Communities.

S. 584/H.R. 1443 - The Complete Streets Act of 2009

Complete Streets is a policy that ensures ALL potential road users – including bicyclists – are taken into account in the planning, design, operation, and maintenance of ALL highways. This Federal policy is necessary because most Federal transportation funding still goes to road projects that have no safe and convenient place for bicyclists, pedestrians, transit users, and people with disabilities to travel securely.

An effective, enforceable and measureable complete streets policy, consistently applied to all Federal transportation projects, will ensure that our transportation system addresses the needs of the entire population. No new funding is required for this policy – in fact, it will save taxpayer dollars by avoiding the need for costly retrofits of poorly designed roads.

Key Facts and Figures

- Complete Streets in Boulder, Colo., have helped reduce single occupant vehicle trips by more than 10 percent, and increased bicycling, walking and transit use.
- A national AARP poll found 47 percent of Americans over age 50 could not cross main roads near their home safely. Almost 55 percent reported no bike lanes or paths, and 48 percent had no comfortable place to wait for the bus.



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- 43 percent of people with safe places to walk within 10 minutes of home met recommended activity levels; among those without safe places to walk, just 27 percent met the recommendation.

Status

More than 100 state and local agencies have adopted Complete Streets policies; the Federal Highway Administration has endorsed this approach since 1999. However, Federal leadership and oversight is necessary to ensure effective implementation.

S. 584, the Complete Streets Act of 2009, was introduced by Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and currently has 12 co-sponsors. ***H.R. 1443, the Complete Streets Act of 2009***, was introduced by Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) and currently has 48 co-sponsors. The companion bills would:

- Require states and metropolitan planning organizations to adopt Complete Streets policies, for federally-funded projects, within two years or a portion of the states' flexible Surface Transportation funding will be directed to safety improvements.
- Ensure policies are flexible and cost-effective, allowing exemptions when costs are demonstrably prohibitive.

National Bike Summit Ask

Please ask your senator and representative to co-sponsor S. 584 or H.R. 1443. Please thank them if they have already done so.

Additional Information

In 2009, the Complete Streets movement exceeded 100 jurisdictions across the United States that have adopted Complete Streets policies. To date, 18 states are now home to at least one Complete Streets policy and 20 have a state-level law or policy. Now is the time for Congress to lead in this effort to make our nation's communities more livable, by enacting a national Complete Streets policy.

S. 1156 - The Safe Routes to School Program Reauthorization Act/H.R. 4021 - The Safe Routes to High Schools Act

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) is a proven national program to create safe, convenient and fun ways for children to walk and bike to school. In 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provided \$600 million over five years to enable states and local agencies to implement construction, education and encouragement programs around schools Kindergarten through eighth grade.

More than 70 percent of the funds have been spent in 6,500 schools around the country – impressive numbers – yet only 7.5 percent of eligible schools will receive funding under the current program. The funds are in great demand but Federal and state regulations and paperwork hamper implementation.



Key Facts and Figures

- Fewer than 15 percent of school students walk or bike to school, down from nearly 50 percent in 1969.
- SRTS projects have increased walking and bicycling by between 20 percent and 200 percent and typically show crash reductions of up to 50 percent.
- Walking one mile to and from school equals two-thirds of the recommended level of physical activity per day and also improves air quality and congestion around schools.

Status

The SRTS program is part of the larger Federal transportation bill that is pending reauthorization. We ask members of Congress to co-sponsor bills that would further expand the scope and funding for the program.

S. 1156, the Safe Routes to School Program Reauthorization Act, was introduced by Senators Harkin (D-IA), Sanders (I-VT), Merkley (D-OR) and Collins (R-ME) and currently has 22 co-sponsors. The bill would:

- Increase funding to \$600 million annually (triple the FY2009 level of \$183 million) and improve project delivery by reducing paperwork and unnecessary regulations.
- Expand eligibility to high schools; allow funds to be used for bus stop safety and rural access programs; add a research and evaluation component.

H.R. 4021, the Safe Routes to High School Act, was introduced by Representative Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and currently has 38 co-sponsors. The bill would:

- Expand SRTS eligibility to high schools

National Bike Summit Ask

Please ask your senator and representative to co-sponsor S. 1156 or H.R. 4021. Please thank them if they have already done so.

H.R. 3734 - Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act

Almost 80 percent of the U.S. population lives in urban areas, many of which are suffering from deteriorating community infrastructure, limited open spaces, poor health and chronic disease. Urban parks and recreation facilities play key roles in improving the health of our nation's urban communities by providing convenient access to the places, spaces and opportunities that lead to increased physical activity.

Mountain biking – one of the fastest growing outdoor recreation activities among youth – can be part of the solution. Natural surface trails and bike skills areas can broaden the recreational offerings in suburban and urban communities, introduce people to mountain biking, and build skills and self-esteem. Urban trails can stimulate a new generation of bicyclists and outdoor enthusiasts.



Key Facts and Figures

- The creation of, or enhanced access to, places for physical activity led to a 26 percent increase in the percentage of people exercising regularly (source: CDC).
- For the largest 85 cities in the country, with a total population of 57.2 million, the health savings from parks is an estimated \$3.08 billion.
- In areas where urban parks have been used as redevelopment tool, surrounding vacancy rates have dropped by as much as 40 percent.

Status

There has been no dedicated federal funding to support urban parks since the last round of grants under the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Act were awarded in 2001.

H.R. 3734, the Urban Revitalization and Livable Communities Act, was introduced by Representative Albio Sires (D-NJ) and has 112 co-sponsors. The bill would:

- Authorize \$445 million annually for development and revitalization of urban parks and community recreation infrastructure, including a range of cost effective bicycling facilities.
- Require local matching funds for the Federal assistance grants.

National Bike Summit Ask

Please ask that your representative co-sponsor H.R. 3734. Please thank them if they have already done so.

S. 2747 - Land and Water Reauthorization and Funding Act

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established in 1964 by using a portion of off-shore oil and gas drilling fees to pay for conservation projects, such as land preservation and trails. Each year, \$900 million is authorized for the LWCF, with half of the funds traditionally going to Federal and half to state projects. Congress has only appropriated the full amount once; in most years, funding has been less than half of the authorized limit. Full funding of LWCF at \$900 million annually is necessary to enable Federal and state land management agencies to complete and fully protect national, scenic and historic trails. LWCF state assistance grants provide funding to acquire and build trails throughout our state and local parks.

Keys Facts and Figures

- Active outdoor recreation contributes \$730 billion and 6.5 million jobs to the economy and contributes to healthy, active and sustainable communities.
- More than 80 percent of the public supports using funds from oil and gas fees to help preserve our natural areas.
- In 2009, the Department of Interior collected more than \$5 billion from offshore energy production and only \$180 million went into the LWCF.



Status

The President's FY2011 budget requests \$620 million for the LWCF, a welcome 30 percent increase over FY2010. However, federal and state land management agencies require, consistent and reliable funding at the \$900 million level.

S. 2747, the Land and Water Reauthorization and Funding Act, was introduced by Senators Bingaman (D-NM) and Baucus (D-MT) and has 11 co-sponsors. The bill would:

- Permanently dedicate \$900 million annually LWCF.

National Bike Summit Ask

Please ask your senator to co-sponsor S. 2747. Please thank them if they have already done so.

The Congressional Bike Caucus

The Congressional Bike Caucus is a bi-partisan group with three primary objectives: promote federal policies that encourage cycling as a valid mode of transportation; improve cycling opportunities for people who commute and cycle to the Hill; and organize and lead informal recreational rides for Members and staff. Leadership for the Congressional Bike Caucus is co-chaired by Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Tom Petri (R-WI) in the House, and Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) in the Senate. The Congressional Bike Caucus is comprised of 217 House members and 16 Senate members as of February 18, 2010. Working with the Caucus, we have the opportunity to highlight a transportation option that burns calories rather than fossil fuels, requires minimal infrastructure investments, and makes our nation healthier.

National Bike Summit Ask

- Please ask your member to get involved and join the Congressional Bike Caucus, and thank them if they are already a member!

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