



Increasing Physical Activity

THROUGH COMMUNITY DESIGN

A Guide for Public Health Practitioners
and Livable Community Advocates

NATIONAL CENTER FOR BICYCLING & WALKING | June 2010



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The report may be downloaded at www.bikewalk.org.



Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction

Health, Physical Activity & Community Design

Treating the Patient

Chapter Two: How to Improve Conditions for Walking and Bicycling

What's Your Role?

What Needs Doing?

Chapter Three: How to Get It Funded

Develop a Strategy

Follow Through with the Project

Summary

Chapter Four: Resources & Glossary

Public Health

Transportation

Land Use Planning & Community Design

Facility Planning & Design

Schools

Funding Sources & Programs

Advocacy

Environmental

Equity & Social Justice

Glossary

“Ultimately it is the right people who make change possible; we either have to be them or find them.”



**Sharon Z. Roerty, AICP/PP/MCRP
Executive Director, National Center for
Bicycling & Walking**

Walk With Me

A letter from Sharon Z. Roerty, Executive Director of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking

Picture a place with short, connected blocks, a variety of building types and destinations proximate to each other. Then picture a place with four or more lanes of traffic, double left turn lanes, limited through streets, large gaps between buildings and deep property setbacks. It is probably easy to include people walking or biking in the first mental picture; and less so in the second.

About a year ago I was facilitating a workshop for a group of advocates in southern Alabama who had a vision of a region with a continuous network of sidewalks, paths, trails, and complete streets spanning two counties, and crossing a major body of water. In the audience were two college students, who were leaders in a campus sustainability group. As part of the workshop each person was asked to think of and then describe a place where they like to walk or bike. When it came to be the students' turn, they both retreated, before confessing that they never had lived in such a place. They couldn't picture this place.

In 2002 when we published, *Increasing Physical Activity through Community Design*, we did it as a guide to engage public health practitioners and encourage them to become more involved in community design issues. The current adaptation of the IPA guidebook is still aimed at public health practitioners, however it recognizes that a more deeply rooted trans-disciplinary approach is necessary for creating the public will and support for change and sustaining it. Public health practitioners can't do it alone; planners can't do it alone; elected officials need a reason to do it; environmentalists, social workers, educators, housing developers and advocates—they all need to be part of it.

Not long after I met the college students from Alabama, I participated in a bike rodeo in Newark, NJ. On a steamy Saturday in July, 125 children, ages 3-12, showed up to learn to ride. Thanks to the generosity of many, each and every child was outfitted with a refurbished bike, a new helmet, and received instruction from a trained professional on the rules of the road—all at no cost. They negotiated the cones and the chalk lines of the parking lot obstacle course, learning how to start, stop, and handle their new bicycles. I can still picture the happy faces as the children left the courtyard with their “new” bikes and new confidence. Newark is struggling to become a bicycle friendly city. If everyone continues to work together it will happen.

This guidebook is about implementation. For over a decade, the National Center for Bicycling & Walking has been leading the fight to make our communities healthy by design. Fortunately in 2010 our efforts are bolstered by national leaders and national programs. First Lady Michelle Obama has initiated “Let's Move” a program that promotes physical activity. USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood has been making public statements about community design that supports walking and biking; and he is backing up his statements with policy directives. Also in 2010 there is a better understanding of the built environment and its impact positively and negatively on our mobility and health. We still have a lot of work to do but we are on the right road.



INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY THROUGH COMMUNITY DESIGN

*A Guide for Public Health Practitioners
and Livable Community Advocates*

NATIONAL CENTER FOR BICYCLING & WALKING

Chapter Three

HOW TO GET IT FUNDED

| | |
|--|----|
| Develop a Strategy | 2 |
| <i>Maintenance</i> | 3 |
| <i>Capital Improvements</i> | 3 |
| <i>Private Development</i> | 4 |
| <i>Identify Funding Sources</i> | 5 |
| <i>State and Local Funding for Road Projects</i> | 5 |
| <i>Federal Funding Programs</i> | 5 |
| <i>Local Revenue Sources</i> | 12 |
| Follow Through with the Project..... | 14 |
| Summary | 15 |



“Can anybody remember when the times were not hard and money not scarce?”

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)

Eventually, someone will ask the question, “How are we going to pay for it?” Funds are ultimately limited, and competition for them can be fierce. Pedestrian and bicycle projects traditionally have been low on the priority list of both elected officials and public agencies, although this has changed somewhat in the last decade thanks to growing public demand and new federal funding programs.

It is useful to keep in mind just how much money is being spent on transportation projects. Each year tens of billions of dollars are spent in the U.S. for road construction, maintenance and operations. However, only a tiny fraction of that is spent on pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Although some of these program funds are restricted to specific purposes, the majority are flexible and can be used for pedestrian and bicycle improvements. There’s a real opportunity to direct a greater share of these program funds to long-overlooked improvements in walking and bicycling network.

This chapter will give you a basic understanding of funding processes. With this knowledge you can better advocate for the use of a greater portion of these funds for bicycling and walking facilities. Although it is not always easy, many more projects are getting built thanks to good planning, commitment, advocates who understand the funding process, and community support. Indeed, a lack of funds is rarely the real hurdle to be overcome; instead, it is a lack of commitment to making it happen.

Develop a Strategy

The ways in which bicycle and pedestrian facilities are funded can vary tremendously from community to community, and the funding process may appear mysterious to most citizens and government officials. Typically, numerous agencies—at federal, state, regional and local levels—control portions of available funds for specific purposes, and they all have different processes for determining what gets funded.

Transportation funding, particularly funding involving federal and state sources, may be allocated years in advance. Some state and most local sources are distributed annually, whereas private sources can have more flexibility. A successful funding strategy requires familiarity with the local process. You also need to plan ahead and remain alert to opportunities.

It may help to understand that most public road projects are conducted either through maintenance or capital improvement programs, or by private developers as a condition of approval for their developments. These areas are funded separately and your approach to getting projects done should take that into account. You should also be aware of the annual schedule for getting projects considered for funding.



Maintenance

Crosswalk installation, bike lane striping, sidewalk repair and minor construction such as curb ramps can often be done as maintenance projects. Few maintenance departments have an adequate budget for everything they need to do, so you will have to develop a strong base of support for your project request to get it implemented this way. In cases where property owners are responsible for adjacent sidewalks, you might need to be persistent to get their attention (some municipalities rigorously enforce maintenance codes when violations are brought to their attention).

Here's where planning ahead comes in. If you have a scheme for a logical series of improvements that can be spread over time, it will be easier to get the maintenance department to budget for the improvements than if you come to them with random projects. Make a list grouped by street or travel corridor and roughly ranked by priority. Show how each project will eliminate a hazard or solve a problem.

It is also a big plus if you can piggyback small bicycle and pedestrian improvements on larger projects, such as street repaving or expansion. The additional cost may be incidental and more easily included in a major project. You might want to look at your area's capital improvement program to see if any projects are planned for streets on which bicycle or pedestrian improvements are needed.

Capital Improvements

Capital improvement projects, such as rebuilding a road or constructing a long segment of new sidewalk, are more expensive and more formal than maintenance projects. Before funding is even considered, the project may need to be evaluated, studied, conceptually designed and scoped (where project components and costs are identified). Depending on the agency, there may be some public involvement, possibly including citizen committees. Advocates should be involved in this early planning to ensure that pedestrian and bicycle needs are given adequate attention.

Things can get quickly off track, so keep your head up, your eyes and ears open and talk to everyone. Establish and maintain close contact with state and local transportation representatives so that any projects that might affect your neighborhood or community are known and discussed well ahead of formal scoping.

There are several planning steps any community can take to define and express its needs and desires in a way that improves its chances for success:

- create a written and visual plan of what needs to be done;
- get your vision and projects included in formal transportation plans and programs that are updated periodically (see sidebar page 33); and
- help get supporting development codes and standards adopted.

“Keep your head up, your eyes and ears open, and talk to everyone.”

Oregon Main Street Handbook, 1999

Three project origins:

- Maintenance
- Capital improvements
- Private Development



SOURCE: WWW.PEDBIKEMAGES.ORG/DAN BURDEN

Getting Projects in Local Plans

Many municipalities follow national guidelines for capital improvement plans (CIPs). Three of the recommendations for developing a CIP are of interest to pedestrian and bicycle advocates:

- The process for developing the plan should allow ample opportunity for stakeholder involvement in prioritizing projects and review.
- The CIP should take into account overall affordability in terms of both capital and operating costs, community concerns, available alternatives, coordination with other projects (including projects being considered by other governmental entities), impacts on services, beneficiaries of the project and important community goals such as those related to economic development or the environment.
- An evaluation of capital financing alternatives should address equity considerations—who will pay for the project in relation to who benefits from it.

Project selection and commitment of funds usually occur at a formal hearing, although much of the groundwork is done long before. If your project is not selected the first time around, don't despair. Most project lists, although they may be modified annually, span several years and include long-term projects that tie up much of the funding. You may need to organize more support to rise to the top.

The communities that are best positioned to take advantage of funding and other opportunities are those that have done their homework. This means creating a dynamic and very public vision of what the community wants to be—and committing to that vision.

It also means continuously promoting the vision to decision makers at all levels. Major projects may be years in the making, so a community needs to make the effort to keep locally important projects alive. The projects that have long-term champions are the ones that get implemented. So it is important that groundwork is laid to ensure your project has strong community and agency support from inception through completion.

Private Development

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are also built and paid for by private developers as part of their projects. This might involve improving streets on property frontage or building entirely new public streets and intersections. In many rapidly growing areas, private sources fund the majority of new projects.

Your local government can require facilities as part of project approval and review the site design for compliance with adopted standards. But exceptions are often made during the review process and, depending on the agency, there may be little public involvement. You may not even hear of the project details until they are approved, at which time it may be too late to make meaningful changes.

For these types of projects, your strategy is to be connected with the people making decisions and to get good road design standards and development codes adopted. If you can, keep in touch with developers, bankers, planners, commission members, legislators and others who can help. Get someone who's familiar with planning to review your local or state standards and codes. Find out where and what changes need to be made.

Get help to develop a list of specific changes and improvements you want included. Most agencies update their standards and codes as needed (for example, to respond to disability requirements or policy changes). Although the code development process is not always set up for much public input, your contacts with decision-makers will help get attention to your issues when the time comes.



SOURCE: WWW.PEDBIKEIMAGES.ORG/DAN BURDEN



The underlying land-use policies and plans may need changing to support more pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly development. Land-use practices vary significantly around the country. Some states have comprehensive land-use laws that are directly tied to multi-modal transportation, whereas other states barely regulate land use at all. In either case, local governments generally have significant power to manage development. You can learn more about land-use planning from resources listed in Chapter 4.

Identify Funding Sources

Funds for pedestrian and bicycle projects generally come from some combination of the following sources:

- state or local transportation funds, usually as part of a larger road project;
- funds appropriated through federal transportation legislation such as SAFETEA-LU funds (see sidebar for definition), which are administered by state or local agencies;
- local revenue sources; and
- private donations.

Keep in mind that the names of individual funding programs may vary from location to location. The following discussion will introduce you to the general types of funding sources that are being used for pedestrian and bicycle projects.

State and Local Funding for Road Projects

Depending on where you live, most street projects may be managed by the state transportation department or by a local transportation agency. Check with your local agency to find out who is responsible for the various streets and highways in your area. If it's the state, the state's bicycle and pedestrian coordinator can help.

New road construction and modernization projects (added lanes, revamped intersections, etc.) should always include pedestrian and bicycle components, such as sidewalks, crossings and paved shoulders. These provisions are typically a minor portion of the total cost of a larger project. If a proposed project doesn't provide for pedestrian and bicycle needs, it may have been improperly scoped and may not meet federal and state guidelines. Request that the project be redesigned and that scoping procedures be improved in the future.

Federal Funding Programs

Transportation Funding Programs 1991-2010

Over the past 20 years, ISTEA, TEA-21 and SAFETEA-LU (see sidebar for definitions) have become the flagship funding programs for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. SAFETEA-LU provided more than \$244 billion dollars over its six-year timeframe. While the SAFETEA-LU legislation expired in September 2009, it has been temporarily extended until a new federal transportation funding bill is signed into law. While a new bill was introduced in mid-2009, known as the Surface Transportation Authorization Act, it has yet to be signed into law.¹

How the Federal Transportation Money Flows

Long-Range Transportation Plans

Since the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations, or MPOs (transportation planning agencies in metropolitan areas with populations of 50,000 or more), are required to develop and maintain long-range transportation plans. Further, ISTEA and its successors, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), require that bicyclists and pedestrians be given due consideration in state and MPO long-range transportation plans.

Transportation Improvement Programs

Federal transportation legislation also requires states and MPOs to develop Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs). TIPs are short-range plans that identify transportation projects to be funded and implemented in the next 3-5 years. Projects listed in the TIPs must be consistent with their respective state and local long-range transportation plans.

State Bicycle & Pedestrian Coordinators

Go to: www.walkinginfo.org/assistance/contacts.cfm





SOURCE: WWW.PEDBIKEIMAGES.ORG/DAN BURDEN

The federal transportation legislation is where all states and U.S. territories get their federal transportation funds, which are generated by gasoline taxes and are then redistributed to the states. A large portion of “state” funds used for transportation projects and programs is really just a redistribution of federal funds, which emanate from SAFETEA-LU.

Beginning with ISTEA in 1991, TEA-21 in 1998 and SAFETEA-LU in 2005, federal transportation policy has dramatically changed the way the United States conducts its highway construction and funding activities, especially in the way it required states to consider pedestrians and bicycling in the transportation mix and allowed states greater flexibility in funding programs and projects related to walking and bicycling.

These funding programs provided substantial federal support for bicycling and walking by retaining important provisions in planning; adding new policies, programs and standards to accommodate walking and bicycling; and creating new funding opportunities to benefit these modes. Since ISTEA, each federal transportation bill has made incremental improvements in funding and policies for supporting walking, bicycling and livable communities. Future transportation bills will not only increase funding for walking and bicycling, but are likely to support construction of complete streets, and recommend that the health impacts of new transportation projects be studied and understood before anything is built.

Two of the most popular sources of funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities that currently exist in the federal legislation are the Transportation Enhancement Program and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Programs, described below.

Under SAFETEA-LU, the Safe Routes to School Program was developed as a specific stand-alone program. Funding in this program is related to both the physical infrastructure and accompanying projects that aid in the delivery of a safe and secure environment for walking and biking in the vicinity of schools. A more detailed description can be found later in this chapter.

The Hazard Elimination program is another funding category under the federal legislation that supports projects eligible for federal safety funds to improve the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists. Many of the SAFETEA-LU program funds can be used for bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and typically are when state and local authorities are taking a comprehensive approach to safety.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

In addition to the current SAFETEA-LU funding, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provides transportation and infrastructure funding. ARRA, the billion dollar stimulus program signed by President Obama in early 2009, provided funding for states and local areas to revive the ailing economy



and direct money to the state and local authorities for programs and policies, including transportation projects.

The overall funding for transportation related projects under ARRA totaled about \$48 billion, which was distributed to state and local governments through both a formula and grant process. Within the ARRA, the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Discretionary Grant Program provided \$1.5 billion towards innovative, multi-modal projects that had the potential to provide economic and environmental benefits. The recipients of these grants were announced in February 2010.² Many of the projects selected for funding included “complete streets” components with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Sustainable Communities Funding Program

The Partnership for Sustainable Communities, a collaborative program including the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, began its efforts in 2009 to help American families gain better access to affordable housing, more transportation options, and lower transportation costs. The six livability principles guiding the Partnership³ include:

- **Provide more transportation choices.** Develop safe, reliable and economical transportation choices to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our nation’s dependence on foreign oil, improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote public health.
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Enhance economic competitiveness.** Improve economic competitiveness through reliable and timely access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs by workers, as well as expanded business access to markets.
- **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities—through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling—to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments, and to safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Coordinate and leverage federal policies and investment.** Align federal policies and funding to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding, and increase the accountability and effectiveness of all levels of government to plan for future growth, including making smart energy choices such as locally generated renewable energy
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods—rural, urban or suburban.



WWW.PEDESTRIANIMAGES.ORG/DAN BURDEN

Transportation Enhancements

See the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse at www.enhancements.org for detailed information.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse (NTEC). The header features the NTEC logo and a navigation menu with links for Home, TE Basics, Procurement, State Programs, Project List, Grant, Project, Examples, News, Links, and FAQ. Below the navigation, there is a 'Welcome to NTEC' section with introductory text and a list of links: 'Learn the Basics of TE', 'Access state-specific information', 'Learn about TE in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act', and 'Download documents online'. A 'Federal legislation related to TE is available through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) TE Web site.' is also mentioned. A 'Quick document links' section includes 'Guiding Principles and Overview (PDF)', 'Guide to Transportation Enhancements', and 'Just Released! The 13th FY 2010 TE Spending Report, including ARRA expensat! Read the full report, or check out this EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.' There is also a 'Visit the TE Image Library' section with a small image and text: 'Images express the project TE can have an opportunity for better than words alone. See examples of TE projects from across the nation.' At the bottom, a red box contains the text: 'Questions about TE? We Can Help! 888.368.NTEC (888.368.6332)'.

Transportation Enhancements Program

The Transportation Enhancements (TE) Program is the most common source of funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Each state is required to set aside 10 percent of its annual Surface Transportation Program funds for Transportation Enhancement Activities (TEAs). Eligible funding categories include:

- pedestrian and bicycle facilities;
- pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities; and
- conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails.

Other eligible TEA funding categories that can indirectly enhance the pedestrian and bicycling experience include:

- scenic or historic highway programs, including tourist and welcome centers, which may include designation signs and markers;
- landscaping and scenic beautification, including improvements such as street furniture, lighting, public art and landscaping;
- historic preservation;
- rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities; and
- control and removal of outdoor advertising.

Some typical improvements funded through the TE Program include:

- streetscape improvements;
- sidewalks and crosswalks;
- curb extensions at corners;
- pedestrian light fixtures;
- benches and landscaping;
- information kiosks;
- pedestrian and bicycle access across barriers;
- pedestrian and bicycle trails and pathways;
- bicycle racks on buses;
- bicycle route signing;
- bicycle parking facilities; and
- rail-to-trail conversions.

State Transportation Enhancement Programs

The specifics of TE programs vary from state to state. Each state devises its own application and selection process, establishes selection criteria and adopts methods to streamline the development and management of projects.

No two state TE programs are exactly alike. However, all state programs have these basic features: 1) eligibility criteria, 2) selection criteria, 3) selection cycle, 4) advisory committees, 5) project implementation, 6) innovative financing, and 7) streamlined project development.



In addition, all states have:

- a unique funding level for TE (based on a formula identified in the federal funding legislation);
- a TE coordinator who administers the program with oversight by an FHWA TE coordinator;
- requirements that call for a public entity with taxing authority to sponsor or endorse an applicant's project; and
- conditions that require any phase of a project that uses TE funds to comply with all state and federal requirements for developing and contracting transportation projects.

Beyond these aspects, state approaches vary.

Eligibility. The 12 categories of activities identified by the federal legislation are not recognized by all states. Some states lump eligible activities into broad groups, such as nonmotorized transportation, scenic beautification, historic preservation and environmental mitigation. Other states do not allow funding of certain categories and projects.

Selection criteria. Many states devise unique criteria to simplify the project-selection process. For example, minimum or maximum award amounts may apply; sponsors may be limited in the number of awards received; and a local funding match of more than 20 percent may be required. To ensure projects contribute to local priorities and are feasible, other factors may be used to score or rank applications.

Selection cycles. Some states evaluate TE projects continuously. Other states review and select projects quarterly, annually or biennially.

Advisory committees. To increase chances of receiving an award, become familiar with the advisory committee process. Most states have advisory committees, but their duties, composition and appointments vary. Citizen advisors may be appointed for the expertise they bring to the selection process, or committee membership may be limited to state employees and elected officials.

Project implementation. Project costs that are reimbursable in one state may not be in another. Some states fund construction, but not planning, preliminary design or particular costs such as utility relocation.

Innovative financing. A local match of at least 20 percent is usually required. Many states allow other agencies to contribute to that match or allow in-kind donations, such as the value of land and labor, to qualify as the local share. In many cases, a greater match will increase chances for project selection.

Streamlined project development. Many states have flexible project review requirements, such as exemption from rigorous environmental impact reviews for certain projects or allowance for innovation in project management requirements. Some states require project applicants to attend training sessions before submitting an application, which often results in simplification of paperwork, shorter timelines, and elimination of cost overruns.

Transportation Enhancement Coordinators

Go to: www.enhancements.org/contacts.asp

The screenshot shows the 'TE Contacts' page of the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. The page is titled 'TE Contacts' and provides information for various stakeholders. It includes sections for 'State TE Managers', 'State FHWA TE Contacts', and 'FHWA Headquarters Contacts'. Each section provides instructions on how to contact the relevant personnel for more information about the TE program, federal regulations, and eligibility requirements. The page also includes a 'NTEC Contact' section with the address and phone number for the National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. The website header includes the text 'NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE' and a navigation menu with items like 'Home', 'TE Basics', 'Funding', 'Projects', 'List', 'Search', 'FHWA', 'FHWA TE Contacts', 'FAQ', 'About Us', 'TE Contacts', and 'Resources'.



CMAQ Improvement Program

Go to: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/cmaqpgs/

The screenshot shows the FHWA website for the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. It includes a navigation bar with 'Home', 'About CMAQ', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area features a title 'Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program' followed by a detailed introduction to the program's history and purpose. A sidebar on the right contains 'Important Information' with links for 'SAFETEA-LU CMAQ Funding and Assessment', 'CMAQ Photo Gallery', and 'Guidance Documents'. The main text explains that the program was established in 1991 to address air quality and congestion, and is authorized by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act of 2005 (TEA-21). It also mentions that the program is administered by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and that states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are responsible for implementing the program.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program

The second most popular source of funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities is the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. This program provides funding to areas that are officially designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as air quality “non-attainment” or “maintenance” areas. CMAQ funds in both areas must be spent on projects that help to reduce ozone (smog), carbon monoxide or particulate matter (soot) pollution. Every state, even those without non-attainment areas, receives a minimum amount of CMAQ funding that it may spend on pollution-reduction programs, which can include pedestrian- and bicycle-related projects.

Types of improvements funded through the CMAQ program include:

- bicycle lane striping;
- bicycle parking facilities;
- sidewalks and paths;
- bicycle maps; and
- pedestrian and bicycle commuter education and promotion.

Chicago has utilized CMAQ funding to aid in the development of bicycle lanes. Chicago’s “Streets for Cycling” bikeway projects utilized CMAQ funding to plan and implement the majority of the bike lanes that exist in the city today. Beginning in 1995 and lasting through 2008, Chicago installed approximately 94 miles of on-street bicycle lanes and 20 miles of marked shared lanes along roadways within the City.⁴

While the majority of bicycle lanes were installed adjacent to the existing travel lanes, Chicago has several routes where roadway width would not allow for the traditional marked bicycle lane. In those instances, the City chose to install “share lane markings.” These markings show the cyclist where to best to ride within the shared lane, and alert motorists to the presence of cyclists.

Hazard Elimination

Since 1991, the federal funding legislation has expanded eligible uses of Surface Transportation Program (STP) safety set-aside funds to include safety improvements for pedestrians and bicyclists. In addition, Hazard Elimination (part of the STP safety set-aside) funds continue to be eligible for pedestrian and bicyclist pathways, trails and facilities. Traffic calming projects are also specifically mentioned as eligible activities. Types of improvements that could be funded through the Hazard Elimination Program include:

- replacement of unsafe “wheel-grabber” drainage grates;
- improvements to and repair of publicly owned bicycle paths or trails;
- traffic calming in neighborhoods and school areas; and
- intersection safety improvements that benefit bicyclists and pedestrians (and by extension all roadway users).



Safe Routes to School

The federal Safe Routes to School Program was developed in 2005 to provide funding toward initiatives that enable and encourage children to walk and bicycle to school. Previously, funding for safe routes to schools programs was part of the Hazard Elimination program, discussed above. In addition, the program supports the planning, development and implementation of projects geared toward improving safety conditions and reducing traffic and fuel consumption in the vicinity of schools. Types of improvements that could be funded through the Safe Routes to School Program include:

- infrastructure projects including sidewalk improvements, traffic calming, and pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements;
- on- and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities; and
- traffic control improvements in the vicinity of schools (within approximately 2 miles).

Since the establishment of Safe Routes to School in the SAFETEA-LU legislation, two important organizations have emerged. The National Center for Safe Routes to School is funded by the U.S. Department of Transportation and provides Safe Routes to School programs, knowledge and technical information to support the cause. In addition, the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, which is grant-funded, has established a network of hundreds of organizations, government agencies and professional groups working to set goals, share best practices, secure funding and provide educational materials to agencies that implement Safe Routes to School programs.

Other STP Funds

STP funds for pedestrian and bicycle facilities are not restricted to enhancements, CMAQ or safety set-aside programs. All STP funds may be used to facilitate walking and bicycling, although state departments of transportation typically use most of their STP funds for construction, reconstruction, repair or maintenance of highways for motor vehicle users. Additional types of improvements that can be funded through the STP program include:

- construction of pedestrian and bicycle facilities in conjunction with ongoing highway improvements; and
- nonconstruction projects, such as maps, brochures and public service announcements, related to pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Other SAFETEA-LU Funding Sources

National Highway System (NHS) funds may be used to construct bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways on land adjacent to any highway on the NHS, including interstate highways. Types of improvements funded through the NHS program include shoulder and sidewalk improvements on highways, trails on adjacent rights-of-way and intersection improvements.

National Center for Safe Routes to School

Go to: www.saferoutesinfo.org



Safe Routes to School National Partnership

Go to: www.saferoutespartnership.org



City of Chicago: Bike 2015 Plan

Go to: www.bike2015plan.org



Recreational Trails Program funds may be used for all kinds of trail projects. Of the funds apportioned to a state, 30 percent must be used for motorized trail uses, 30 percent for non-motorized trail uses, and 40 percent for diverse trail uses (any combination).⁵ Types of improvements funded through the Recreational Trails Program include:

- off-road (unpaved) trail improvements;
- trailhead facilities and signing;
- trail user education;
- assessment of trail conditions; and
- patrol and monitoring programs.

National Scenic Byways Program funds may be used for “construction along a scenic byway of a facility for pedestrians and bicyclists.” Scenic byways designations are requested by communities seeking to recognize roads with special scenic, natural, historic, cultural, recreational or archaeological features. These roadways provide an opportunity for communities to highlight their assets, attract visitors and realize economic benefits from tourism and recreation.

Local Revenue Sources

Property Taxes

Local governments use property taxes as their principal source of revenue. Property taxes usually flow into a general fund used to pay for the operation of local government. Some municipalities are able to use property taxes for capital improvement projects. Other communities may not be allowed to use monies in the general fund for street improvements or maintenance or projects that voters have approved.

Local Improvement Districts

Where a group of property owners agree that improvements are needed in their immediate neighborhood, they may also agree to pay for such improvements through an assessment levied by the local government. Payments can span a number of years and may be based on the linear frontage of property, predicted trips generated by the development or other criteria. A local ordinance must be enacted to establish a local improvement district and related conditions. Local improvement districts are sometimes known as urban renewal districts, economic improvement districts or business improvement districts.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are a way to fund public infrastructure associated with new development. The idea is to have developers share the cost of improvements required to support the increased demand their projects cause on transportation, water and sewer, schools or other public services. Impact



fees usually apply to public improvements directly associated with new development. They typically are not used for general infrastructure improvements. If the impact of a development is not immediate, then fees may be put in a fund to help pay for improvements elsewhere in the community.

Exactments

An exactment is a charge or obligation levied in exchange for permission to develop land. Where local governments place the burden of road improvements on abutting landowners and developers, an exactment can be used to require installation of a sidewalk or other improvement in the public right-of-way adjacent to the landowner's property. Exactments are best used for spot improvements or where specific sidewalk sections are missing. However, there is no way to be sure when a developer might submit an application. Further, a municipality needs to have a policy to require exactments when it benefits the community. The preferred option is to have the municipality assume responsibility for construction and maintenance of the pedestrian infrastructure, just as they do for local roads, instead of requiring property owners to assume this obligation.

Private Donations

Private donations can range from corporate investment to individual contributions towards the cost of a community project. They have the significant advantage of demonstrating community support for the project, and can be of tremendous help in convincing municipal governments to fund the balance of a project.

Major employers, such as businesses, hospitals and universities, are always potential benefactors of civic improvements that can encourage foot traffic and additional economic investment in downtown locations. For example, in the 1970s a group of business people in Corning, NY, home to 12,000 people and Corning Glass Works, recognized that the economic health of their downtown relied on a vital downtown core and the tax revenue it provided. Today, after an investment of several million dollars in private and public improvements, Corning is one of the most attractive and walkable cities in the Northeast.

Because some pedestrian and bicycle improvements are small and specific, even individuals can participate in making their communities more friendly to walking and bicycling. Many communities have aptly demonstrated their ability to involve local citizens by obtaining commitments to purchase and install bicycle racks or to have walking surfaces embossed with the name of the contributor or a loved one (as little as \$100 per brick). School students in Oregon have constructed curb ramps, benches and planters as part of learning new skills.

Recreational Trails Program

Go to: www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails



National Scenic Byways Program

Go to: www.byways.org; and



www.scenic.org



Follow Through with the Project

Getting through the funding process is another piece to the puzzle. And while you are just one part of the overall project team, it is important to keep up on the status of the project. The project team, which includes not only you as a public health professional, but community leaders, local planners, transportation and environmental agency officials and citizens, has worked together successfully to bring a project to this point.

Do not relax after a project is approved and funded. Keep in touch with the project manager during the design to learn how your objectives are being addressed. Arrange a site visit to look at special problems. If elements like nonstandard lane widths are desired, make sure these are approved. While the project may be at the point where local engineers and municipal representatives have taken over, it is still important to advocate throughout the life of the project.

Sometimes a project may be assigned a new manager, in which case it is wise to go through the history of the project with the new person. He or she may not be aware of the original discussions and community objectives.

During project construction, check with the project manager on progress and any issues that may come up. Some design decisions are necessarily made in the field, and you want to make sure they are consistent with the project's objectives. Finally, do a walkthrough of the completed project and congratulate the manager and team on a job well done! Remind people to hold a celebration to publicize the improvements and to get good publicity for officials who supported it.



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Summary

Considerable money is spent on transportation, but directing it to bicycle and pedestrian projects is easier said than done. Start by surveying the many funding sources and how they can be used.

Next, deconstruct the local process (state, region or municipality) for taking advantage of those sources. Match your projects (small or large; local or an entire area; retrofit or new) and priorities with likely funding sources. Combine sources where practical, using small amounts to leverage larger ones.

Make sure general roadway projects include adequate provisions for pedestrians and bicyclists. As noted earlier in this report, in 2010, Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood established a policy statement that incorporates accommodation for bicyclists and pedestrians:

The DOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects. Every transportation agency, including DOT, has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to integrate walking and bicycling into their transportation systems. Because of the numerous individual and community benefits that walking and bicycling provide—including health, safety, environmental, transportation, and quality of life—transportation agencies are encouraged to go beyond minimum standards to provide safe and convenient facilities for these modes.⁶

Make sure your community has good planning codes adopted for your community and make sure they are followed. Ensure that transportation policy and project decisions improve walking and bicycling. Show decision-makers how an active community design is a good investment (see Chapter One).

Finally, keep on top of projects. You are only one component of the project team. Projects take years to complete, and people may come and go. Don't forget that the project team, with all its critical contributors, has worked together successfully to bring a project to this point.



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Endnotes

- 1 As of April 2010, new federal transportation legislation was still pending.
- 2 *Press Release: Recovery Act Funded Projects*. Washington: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2010. (No authors given.)
- 3 *Press Release: Interagency Partnership for Sustainable Communities*. Washington: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2009. (No authors given.)
- 4 *Chicago Complete Streets: Federally Funded Bike Lanes in the Windy City*. Chicago: City of Chicago Department of Transportation, 2008. (No authors given.)
- 5 *Fact Sheets on Highway Provisions*. Washington: Federal Highway Administration, 2009, www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/factsheets/rectrails.htm (accessed May 2010).
- 6 *Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations*. Washington: U.S. Department of Transportation, 2010. (No authors given.)



SOURCE: WWW.PEDBIKEIMAGES.ORG/ TIFFANY ROBINSON

The **National Center for Bicycling & Walking** is a national nonprofit organization with offices in Washington, DC, and New Jersey. NCBW developed the award winning Walkable Community Workshop program, which brings together planners, engineers, public health professionals, citizen advocates, youth and others to develop community transportation systems that work for all users. We have facilitated hundreds of community workshops and walking audits, and we count numerous state departments of transportation, metropolitan planning organizations, and local governments as our clients.

The **Active Living Resource Center** is a program of the National Center for Bicycling & Walking. The ALRC is dedicated to reducing health disparities by helping communities remove barriers to everyday physical activity—like walking and bicycling. We have a specific interest in reducing childhood obesity by increasing opportunities for children to regularly and safely walk and bicycle to school and other destinations.

The Active Living Resource Center was initiated with funding support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

For more information on NCBW and/or ALRC visit us at www.bikewalk.org.

For copies of this report, please visit www.bikewalk.org.

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BICYCLING & WALKING



BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES



Active Living
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