

Federal Funding for Safe Routes to School: Evolution Through Four Transportation Bills

2005-2012

A New Program: Stand-Alone Safe Routes to School Funding

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users)



New program provided more than \$1 billion to all states over 7 years



Funding to states for Safe Routes to School infrastructure & non-infrastructure grants to local schools and communities



Each state Department of Transportation had state-level Safe Routes to School coordinator

2012-2015

Combined Funding for Safe Routes to School, Walking, and Biking

MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act)



Eliminated stand-alone federal funding stream for Safe Routes to School



Combined federal Safe Routes to School program and other bicycling and walking programs into Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

30%
less
funding



Overall 30% reduction in federal funding for Safe Routes to School, walking, and bicycling

2015-2021

Continuation of Combined Funding for Safe Routes to School, Walking, and Biking

FAST Act (Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act)



- The funding is still known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), although official name changed to "Surface Transportation Program Setaside"
- The FAST Act retained most of MAP-21's TAP features, with a few changes, such as making nonprofits eligible for the funding & modestly increasing the total amount of TAP funding per year
- States were permitted to transfer up to 50 percent of TAP funds away from walking and biking
- Funding was less than total for Safe Routes to School, walking, and biking when they were separate programs

2022-2026

Increased Combined Funding for Safe Route to School, Walking, and Biking, and Safe Routes to School Expands to High Schools

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 (also known as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law)

Key features of Current TAP funding:

- 60 percent increase in funding: average of \$1.4 billion annually from 2022-2026
- TAP is now set as 10 percent of Surface Transportation Block Grant rather than a fixed dollar amount
- All TAP dollars are awarded through a competitive process by the state or metropolitan planning organizations, with local governments, school districts, and nonprofits eligible to apply
- More funding is suballocated based on community size
- Tighter restrictions on state transferring funds away from walking and bicycling
- States may use up to five percent of funds (after suballocation) to provide technical assistance that improves access to funds and project delivery
- New flexibility for local match including match at program level rather than individual project level and allows HSIP funds to be used as match for TAP projects
- States must define and prioritize "high need" communities when selecting TAP projects
- Funding can be used for Safe Routes to School infrastructure and non-infrastructure, including state and local Safe Routes to School coordinators
- Safe Routes to School projects can now benefit high schools, making K-12 schools eligible