



# Investing in Health, Safety, and Mobility: A Report on State Funding for Walking, Bicycling, and Safe Routes to School

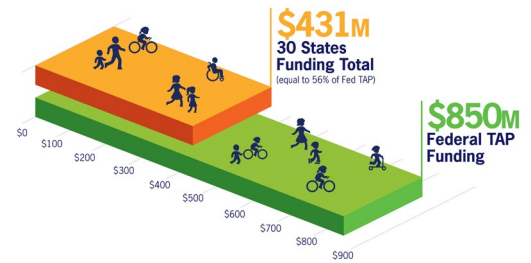
## Executive Summary

For decades, states and the federal government have invested in building roadway infrastructure to connect cars and drivers to the places they need and want to go. Yet, this strategy has contributed to a decline in physical activity as car trips replaced walking and biking trips and means that people without personal vehicles are left with few convenient options for getting around. In recent decades, as public health and transportation experts and advocates have highlighted the need to re-engineer physical activity back into our lives through things like “Activity-Friendly Routes to Everyday Destinations”, the detrimental impact of air pollution on our physical and environmental health, and the inequitable impacts of transportation systems that do not support people to walk, bike, or take transit, there has been a burgeoning interest in changing the transportation landscape to promote physical activity, environment, and equity. To do so, however, requires considerable federal, state, and local investments.

Transportation funding to build accessible and connected networks of walking and biking infrastructure in communities across the country is derived from a complex constellation of sources, the majority of which is federal funding. While federal funding is essential, it is inadequate to meet the needs of states and localities desiring to improve their conditions for people walking and bicycling. Thus, states are increasingly raising their own revenue to pay for the infrastructure and programming that supports safe, connected, convenient transportation options for people walking and bicycling.

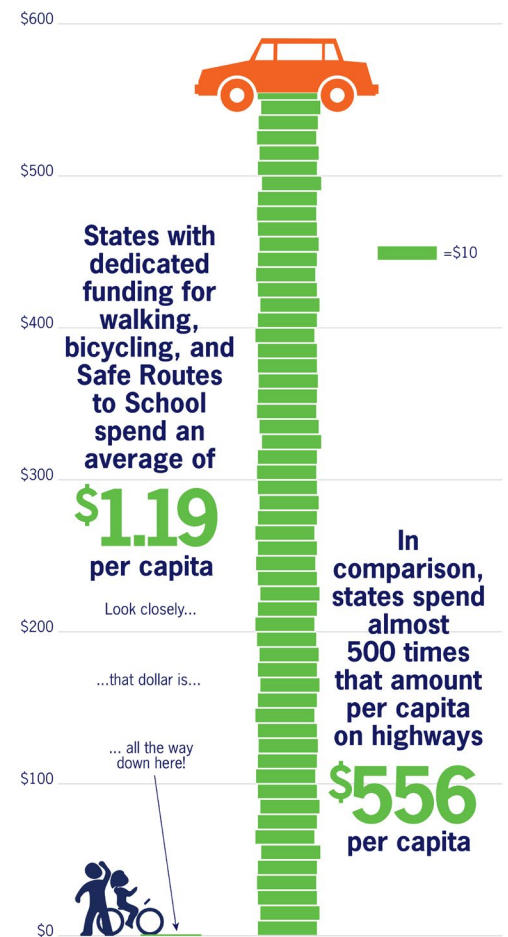
This report evaluates state-level funding for walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School. It includes an analysis of the amounts of funding each state dedicates to walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School and the source of these funds. Case studies and recommendations are provided for how states may develop funding streams that are dedicated to walking, bicycling, and/or Safe Routes to School that are ongoing. It is paramount that when determining funding allocations, states prioritize projects and programming in communities that have been underinvested in or are otherwise made vulnerable by historical and current funding and policy decisions. This report provides evidence that agencies, organizations, and advocates can use to support legislative and administrative changes that dedicate more state funding to support and promote safe, equitable, and connected walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School.

State Active Transportation Funding Totals Over Half Federal Transportation Alternatives Program Funding



## Report Highlights

- Nationally, between 2016-2019, just over half (52%) of project applications submitted to the Transportation Alternatives Program, the primary source of federal funds for walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School were funded. That left \$6.7 billion in unmet demand (cost of projects that applied, but did not receive funding).<sup>1</sup>
- As a result of growing demand and inadequate existing funding, states are increasingly raising their own revenue and spending their own funding for the infrastructure and programming that supports safe, connected, convenient transportation options for people walking and bicycling.
- 30 states use their own funding to pay for infrastructure and programming to promote walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School.
- States with dedicated funding for active transportation spend an average of \$1.19 per capita on infrastructure and programming to support walking, biking, and Safe Routes to School. In comparison, states spend 470 times that amount per capita (\$556) on highways.
- Ten states fund Safe Routes to School or school zone/school aged specific bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure/education with state revenue.
- Three states dedicate federal, non-Transportation Alternatives Program funds to Safe Routes to School.
- State funding for active transportation is equal to 56 percent of federal TAP dollars apportioned to states.
- Eleven states employ practices to advance equity when selecting and awarding active transportation projects supported with state funds.
- Best practices for state funding of active transportation include ongoing streams of funding dedicated to walking, bicycling, and/or Safe Routes to School and prioritizing funding to support projects and programming in communities that have been underinvested in. These communities, which may have been underinvested in or made otherwise vulnerable by historical and current funding and policy decisions, can include people with low-income, Black, Indigenous, and people of color, people with disabilities, and people with no or low vehicle access.
- Agencies, organizations, and advocates can work through legislative and administrative changes to dedicate state funding to support and promote safe, convenient, and connected walking, bicycling, and Safe Routes to School.
- To learn more about steps to take to secure state funding for active transportation, visit Safe Routes Partnership's [Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Campaign Guide](#).



## REFERENCES

1. Nicole Dupuis & Christiana McFarland. "Paying for Local Infrastructure in a New Era of Federalism." National League of Cities. 2016. [https://www.nlc.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/NLC\\_2016\\_Infrastructure\\_Report.pdf](https://www.nlc.org/sites/default/files/2016-12/NLC_2016_Infrastructure_Report.pdf).