



Safe Routes
to School
**National
Partnership**

Support S. 705 - the Transportation Alternatives Program Improvement Act



In MAP-21, Congress implemented significant changes to funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycling and walking through the creation of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). These changes gave local governments decision-making authority over a small amount of federal transportation funding for local priorities.

The Transportation Alternatives Program Improvement Act (TAPIA) works within the structure of the TAP program to address challenges and increase local control. Specifically, TAPIA:

- Gives states and MPOs the ability to help low-income communities.** MAP-21 changed Safe Routes to School projects from 100 percent federally funded to requiring a 20 percent state or local match. This creates a significant barrier to small towns and low-income schools seeking to improve safety for children. TAPIA restores to states the flexibility to meet matching requirements on average across all projects, rather than on a project by project basis.

Solving small town needs:

- People in small towns are taking more trips by foot and bike than people in urban areas.
- Rural communities struggle with lack of sidewalks and faster drivers, creating safety challenges.
- 41 percent of Safe Routes to School projects have been awarded in rural communities.
- Towns and cities are increasingly adding transit, bicycling and walking options to attract Millennials and become more economically competitive.
- The Transportation Alternatives Program is one of the very few federal transportation programs in which local communities of all sizes declare their needs and compete for funding.

Improving safety for kids:

- More than one-quarter of all children's traffic deaths happen when kids are walking or bicycling.
- Safe Routes to School projects reduce child pedestrian injuries by 44 percent, and increase walking and bicycling to school by 37 percent.



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- **Addresses who can apply.** TAPIA restores eligibility for not-for-profit organizations and small metropolitan planning organizations to serve as project sponsors. Under MAP-21, these entities can only be partners and cannot be the project lead which has created challenges for states and localities looking to fund Safe Routes to School education programs and projects in small regions.
- **Creates an even playing field.** MAP-21 created an inequitable regulatory environment for the Transportation Alternative Program, in which these small projects are subjected to the same rules and regulations as large highway projects, posing higher costs and delays for cities and schools that implement these projects—moreso than if the same project was built out of another federal transportation program. TAPIA would ensure effective use of federal dollars and avoid unnecessary delays in local project implementation by applying the same regulatory standards to TAP as to similar projects built under other highway programs.
- **Shifts more funding to the local level.** MAP-21 requires that half of the Transportation Alternatives Program funds be distributed by the state and large MPOs according to population — ensuring that rural areas, mid-sized urban and suburban areas and large metropolitan areas all get an appropriate share of funds. The remaining half of TAP funds can be distributed by the state to any applicants throughout the state. TAPIA would increase the share of TAP funds that are distributed by population to two-thirds of the overall TAP funding level—making sure that resources are fairly distributed among communities of all sizes.
- **Solidifies funding for Transportation Alternatives.** MAP-21 significantly cut funding for TAP from the 2012 funding levels of the combined programs by 30 percent. Due to the change in state allocation formulas, some states have seen cuts of nearly 50 percent of funding. When these cuts are combined with the division of funding between states and large MPOs, the available amounts for projects in many areas are so small that they significantly limit competition for these funds. TAPIA would restore funding to the 2012 level.

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