

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECTS

The information provided below is offered as a general guide to possible funding sources for active transportation projects and activities. Funding sources, program requirements, and available monies are subject to change at any time.

FEDERAL FUNDING

Federal transportation funding is typically authorized in six-year cycles. However, the most recent transportation law, passed in 2012, only provides funding for two years. The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) guarantees \$105 billion for surface transportation funding in fiscal years 2013 and 2014. MAP-21 creates a streamlined, performance-based, and multimodal program to address the many challenges facing the U.S. transportation system. These challenges include improving safety, maintaining infrastructure condition, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency of the system and freight movement, protecting the environment, and reducing delays in project delivery.

Federal surface transportation law provides a tremendous amount of flexibility to fund bicycle and pedestrian improvements from a variety of programs. One means of implementing bicycle and pedestrian projects is to include these types of improvements as a part of larger on-going projects such as roadway paving, new construction, and roadway lane re-striping, among others. States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations are encouraged to find the most appropriate funding source for a particular project.

Federal funding programs for bicycle and pedestrian projects currently include:

- **Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP):** This program consolidates previous provisions for bike and pedestrian activities into a single funding source. Locally, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) will manage the competitive process for selecting TA projects. Eligible activities are grouped under six new headings:
 - *On-road and Off-Road Trail Facilities:* Construction, planning, and design of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure
 - *Safe Routes for Non Drivers:* Also for the construction, planning, and design of bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure aimed at improving access for children, older adults, and individuals with disabilities
 - *Abandoned Railroad Corridors for Trails:* Conversion of rail corridors for pedestrians and bicyclists, or other non-motorized transportation users.
 - *Turnouts, Overlooks, and Viewing Areas:* Similar emphasis on roadside projects formerly included in the scenic byways program.
 - *Community improvement Activities:* Rights-of-way improvements addressing outdoor advertising (e.g., billboards), historic and archeological preservation of transportation facilities, and vegetation management and erosion control.
 - *Environmental Mitigation:* Includes stormwater management, efforts to reduce wildlife mortality, and projects to improve connectivity among terrestrial or aquatic habitats.

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ):** This flexible funding program supports projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet Federal air quality standards. CMAQ-eligible projects include those that shift traffic demand to other modes such as bicycle and pedestrian modes. Similar to TA, SPC manages this program's competitive selection process.
- **Surface Transportation Program:** Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds can be used to preserve or improve conditions and performance on Federal-aid transportation system and can include roads, bridges, non-motorized facilities, transit capital projects, and transit terminals and facilities. Projects must be identified in the state and local Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP/TIP) and be consistent with the state and metropolitan long range transportation plan.
- **Highway Safety Improvement Program:** The purpose of this federal program is to reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries on public roads. The program emphasizes a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety that focuses on results. Pedestrian and bicyclist concerns can be addressed through this program. HSIP funds will be coordinated with the local MPO, PennDOT district, and PennDOT Central Office.
- **National Highway Performance Program:** This program supports the maintenance and improvement of the National Highway System (NHS). Bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways are an eligible expense when associated with an NHS-eligible facility. Projects must be identified in the STIP/TIP and be consistent with the state and metropolitan long range transportation plan.
- **Federal Lands Transportation Program:** This program funds projects that improve access within the Federal estate (national forests, national parks, national wildlife refuges, national recreation areas, and other Federal public lands). The provision of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians is an eligible activity. The funding is allocated to the five Federal Land Management Agencies (Parks, Fish & Wildlife, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and US Army Corps of Engineers). Each agency submits an application for funding.
- **Federal Lands Access Program:** This program funds projects that improve access to Federal lands. Program funds are allocated to the states and managed by the five Federal Land Management Agencies (Parks, Fish & Wildlife, Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and US Army Corps of Engineers). Bicycle and pedestrian improvements are considered an eligible expense under this program. Each state is required to create a committee composed of a representative of the FHWA, a representative of the State DOT, and a representative of the appropriate political subdivisions of the State. This committee makes programming decisions for the funds.
- **Federal Transit Administration Section 5307:** Urbanized area public transportation providers (e.g., the Port Authority of Allegheny County) must expend at least one percent of their Section 5307 allocation on "associated transportation improvements" which may include enhanced bicycle and pedestrian access to transit.

STATE FUNDING

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) initiated the Pennsylvania Community Transportation Initiative (PCTI) in 2008 to promote the principles of Smart Transportation throughout the Commonwealth. PCTI has funded planning projects up to \$300,000 and construction projects of up to \$1 million. The program released its second round of funding with 41 applications (out of more than 200 application) granted \$24.7 million. In addition to the PCTI program, PennDOT uses federally-allocated money throughout the Commonwealth for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Most commonly used sources of funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities come from Transportation Alternatives sources under MAP-21. Not all of these programs have funding or opportunities to apply for funding at all times.

In addition to PennDOT funding, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) has several grant opportunities available to promote active transportation. Grant opportunities are part of the Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) which is designed to assist communities in addressing their recreation and conservation needs as well as supporting economically beneficial recreational tourism. The following grants are available and applicable for bicycle and pedestrian uses for development, construction, or education:

- **Community Recreation and Conservation Program:** These grants fund municipalities and nonprofit organizations to plan for, acquire, develop and/or rehabilitate public park, recreation, open space, greenway, trail and conservation areas and facilities.
- **Pennsylvania Recreational Trails:** These grants help develop and maintain recreational trails and trail related facilities for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use, and to purchase equipment for those purposes.
- **DCNR C2P2 Rails-to-Trails:** These grants help plan for, acquire, or develop rail-trail corridors along abandoned railroad corridors.
- **Rivers Conservation:** These Grants help develop watershed/river-corridor conservation plans, assist with land acquisition and development projects recommended in areas with completed river conservation plans on the rivers conservation registry.
- **Technical Assistance:** Grants to develop/promote/conduct training/education programs; prepare and distribute technical assistance / education manuals / brochures / videos or otherwise provide for training and education of professionals and the general public on a local, county, regional or statewide issues concerning recreation, park, conservation, natural areas, open space, greenways, and trails.
- **Circuit Rider Projects:** These projects provide grant funds for counties, multi-municipal organizations, or COGs to hire a professional, full-time staff person. The circuit rider's purpose is to initiate new programs and services for a county and/or municipalities that individually do not have the financial resources to hire a professional staff person.
- **Peer-to-Peer:** These projects help municipalities improve their park, recreation and conservation services through a collaborative process. Projects are accomplished through contracts with experienced park, recreation and conservation professionals from nearby communities working closely with local leaders.

REGIONAL FUNDING

Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) are federally designated transportation planning organizations located in all urbanized areas in the United States. MPOs are charged with programming all federal transportation funding expended in an urbanized area, as well as maintaining a short-term transportation plan (Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), 4-year horizon) and a long-term transportation and economic development plan (typically 20-year horizon). MPOs also program non-federally funded projects of regional significance. Each MPO's TIP is then integrated into the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), a twelve-year program to provide a broad picture of transportation projects throughout the Commonwealth. Allegheny County is one of ten counties in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission (SPC) region. Other SPC members are Armstrong, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Lawrence, Washington and Westmoreland counties, as well as the City of Pittsburgh.

Transportation Management Associations

Transportation Management Associations (TMAs) are non-profit organizations tasked with creating a better transportation environment for residents, businesses, and visitors. TMAs are comprised of members, often businesses, who support the TMA financially. TMAs in Allegheny County include:

- **Airport Corridor Transportation Association (ACTA):** ACTA serves the business community located along the Parkway West from the western portal of the Fort Pitt Tunnel through Beaver County.
- **Oakland Transportation Management Association (OTMA):** OTMA serves the Oakland area.
- **Pittsburgh Downtown Partnership Transportation Management Association (PDP TMA):** PDP serves the Downtown Pittsburgh central business district.

TMAs sometimes offer transportation services (shuttles, shared-ride, etc), as well as advocate, educate, and offer technical assistance to individuals and member organizations. TMAs often provide funding for community transportation initiatives and are an excellent source of technical assistance to local municipalities for project implementation. TMAs also advocate for funding from state and federal sources and provide valuable education programs to encourage active transportation use.

PRIVATE FUNDING

The Bicycles Belong Coalition is sponsored by member companies of the American bicycle industry. According to their website (www.bikesbelong.org), Bikes Belong has awarded 245 grants to municipalities and grassroots groups since 1999, for a total of nearly \$1.9 million in bicycle projects. Eligibility and funding guidelines are provided on their website under “Grants.”

Other local organizations provide support and funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The Montour Trail Council, for example, builds, operates and maintains the Montour Trail.

Foundations are another source of private funding. There are many foundations in Allegheny County, and some have become active in transportation funding. The Pittsburgh Foundation, one of the largest community foundations in the United States, has provided funding for community transportation initiatives involving workforce accessibility, reverse commuting, and others. Their grant eligibility criteria include projects that “enhance access to entry-level jobs and needed services through integrated transit systems; expand strategic alliances to increase transit ridership; and promote development of healthy transportation alternatives (walking, biking, etc.)” Other foundations also provide active transportation funding. For example, the newly opened section of the Three Rivers Heritage Trail received funding from the Laurel Foundation, the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the Heinz Foundation.