

Summary of 111th Congress: Building a Foundation for the Future.

The first business day of the 111th Congress of the United States was January 6, 2009. In the almost two years that followed, an unprecedented level of activity has been generated around bicycling and active transportation issues. As the 111th Congress draws to a close, we provide an overview of that activity.

Legislation passed

The ***American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*** of 2009 (ARRA) has resulted in the investment of \$400 million of “stimulus” funds in labor-intensive, community-based bicycling and walking projects such as trail bridges, trails, bike lanes, bike parking, bike/transit integration projects. This helped establish a new high water mark for federal funding for bicycling and walking projects.

Two rounds of “***Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery***” (TIGER) grants were awarded – the first through the ARRA program and the second through the annual Appropriations process. These TIGER grants included 24 bike/walk projects in Round 1 including \$43 million for major bikeway initiatives in Philadelphia and Indianapolis. Almost 5% of funds in Round Two awards went to bicycling and walking projects.

Congress also showed strong support for increased investment in energy-efficient and clean transportation by soundly rejecting two efforts to strip funding for key programs. Rep. Eric Cantor (R-VA) proposed the elimination of the Safe Routes to School program in the summer of 2010; in June 2009, Senator Coburn (R-OK) proposed a suspension of funding for the highly-popular transportation enhancements program.

Legislation introduced

(Visit the League’s [Advocacy Center](#) for updates)

Safe Routes to School: legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate to extend the scope of, and funding for, the national Safe Routes to School program. The Senate bill has generated 26 co-sponsors; the House bill has 45 supporters.

Active Community Transportation Act: One of bicycling biggest supporters in the House, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) introduced legislation to ensure a dedicated stream of transportation funding would be programmed in the next transportation bill for completing active transportation networks. The bill attracted 74 co-sponsors.

Complete Streets: bills to require the adoption of Complete Streets policies at the state and local level continued to pick up support in the 111th Congress. Sixty-one House members supported

Congresswoman Matsui's legislation in the House and 14 Senators endorsed Senator Harkin's bill in the Senate.

Surface Transportation Authorization Act: although not formally introduced, a draft transportation reauthorization bill was released by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee under the leadership of Chairman Oberstar (D-MN). The draft included significant policy proposals for integrating nonmotorized transportation initiatives into the overall program while continuing the successful Safe Routes, Congestion Mitigation and Transportation Enhancement programs.

Livability Act of 2009: both the House and Senate have introduced legislation with the aim of establishing a more robust "Office of Livability" in the US Department of Transportation. The House bill introduced by Rep. Cohen (D-TN) had 9 co-sponsors; Senator Dodd's (D-CT) bill had 22 sponsors.

National Transportation Objectives Act of 2009: this bill would establish national transportation objectives and performance targets for the purpose of assessing progress toward meeting national transportation objectives. An important component of the next transportation bill, the proposal picked up 33 supporters in the House.

Energy legislation: both the House and Senate passed their own versions of climate and energy bills, both included a small set-aside of funds for transportation projects. The definition of "transportation" projects included active transportation investments such as bicycling and walking.

Congressional Bike Caucus

Led by Senators Snowe and Durbin, and Representatives Blumenauer and Petri, the Congressional Bike Caucus grew to include more than half the members of Congress. The Caucus hosted briefings on the Cities for Cycling Initiative of the National Association of City Transportation Officials and on a campaign to host the opening stages of the world-renowned Giro D'Italia in Washington, DC.

Members of the Caucus have championed a wide variety of bicycling and walking initiatives for their constituents and a much broader audience. Staffs from Congressmen Connolly (D-VA) and Quigley (D-IL), for example, have been working with the Federal Highway Administration to bring innovative traffic controls and street designs more quickly into the mainstream manuals and guides used by traffic engineers and planners. View a current list of the Bike Caucus [here](#).

Hearings and Testimony

Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming: the League of American Bicyclists testified on the benefits of bicycling in reducing greenhouse gas emissions; the following month Andrea Kjoss White, President of the Bikestation Coalition, spoke about the importance of integrating bikes and transit to the Committee.

Environment and Public Works Committee: the Safe Routes to School National Partnership testified on the benefits of getting more children riding and walking to school as a strategy for congestion relief, promoting physical activity, reducing carbon emissions, etc.

National Bike Summit

In each of the 2009 and 2010 National Bike Summits, participants have met with more than 330 House and Senate offices.

Congressional participants in the Summit in these two years included Representatives Matsui (D-CA), Oberstar (D-MN), Lipinski (D-IL), Coble (R-NC), DeFazio (D-OR), McCall (R-TX), and Blumenauer (D-OR). Former Congressman Ray LaHood starred in both Summits in his new role as Secretary of Transportation.

Congressional Bike Ride participation:

Representative Jack Kingston (R-GA) and Senator Jeff Merkley (D-OR) rode with Summit participants in the annual Congressional Bike Ride in March 2010.

Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR) and Sam Farr (D-CA) rode the Pennsylvania Avenue bike lanes on National Bike to Work Day;

Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR), Oberstar (D-MN) and Secretary LaHood participated in the official opening of the Pennsylvania Avenue bike lanes.

Reps. Petri (R-WI) and Oberstar also joined a ride around Washington DC with the Crown Prince of Denmark and NBA star Caron Butler.

Reps. Donna Edwards (D-MD) and James Moran (D-VA) rode to the opening of the Wilson Bridge Bicycle Path in May 2009.