

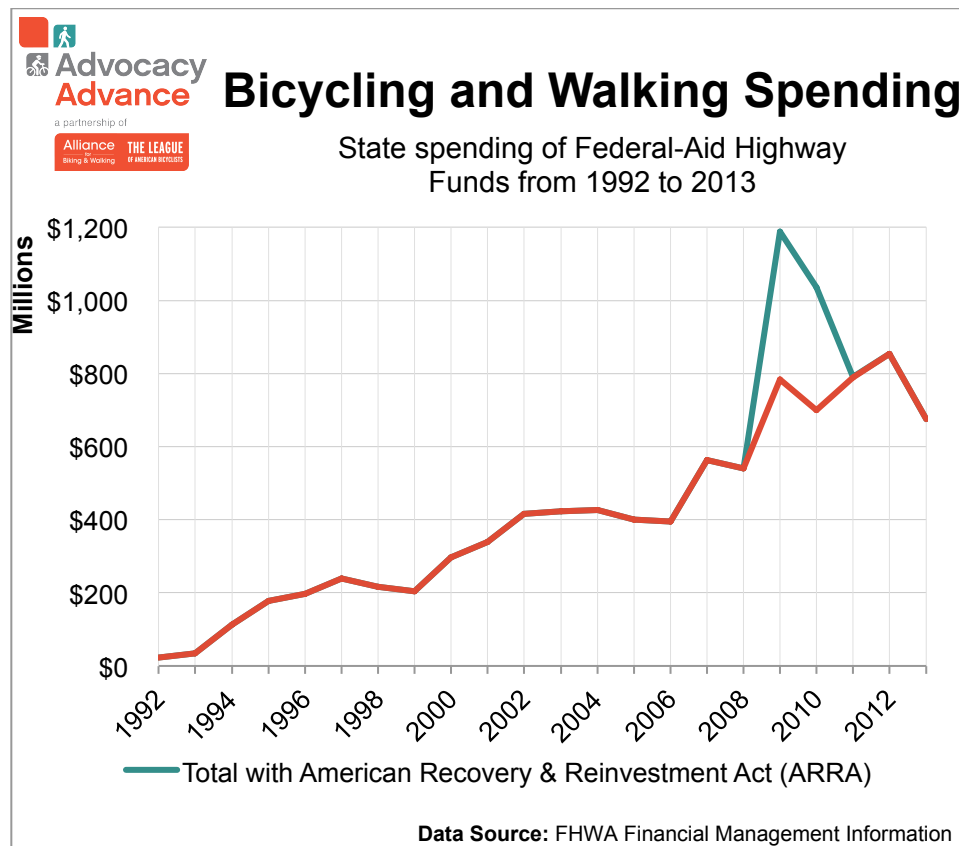
A primer on federal funding for bicycle and pedestrian projects

Funding overview

Since 1992 bicycle and pedestrian projects have been eligible for federal transportation funding. During that twenty year period states have spent a total of \$7.2 billion on 22,000 dedicated bicycle and pedestrian projects, with many dollars and projects going uncounted because they were included in larger road projects. The two decades saw annual growth in the number of projects and total dollars spent, with occasional dips during years that Congress debated the re-authorization of transportation bill. This was a result of increases in the size of the transportation bills, which also added bicycle and pedestrian programs and eligibility, and the states responding to local demand for projects and developing bicycling-friendly project selection practices and other policies.

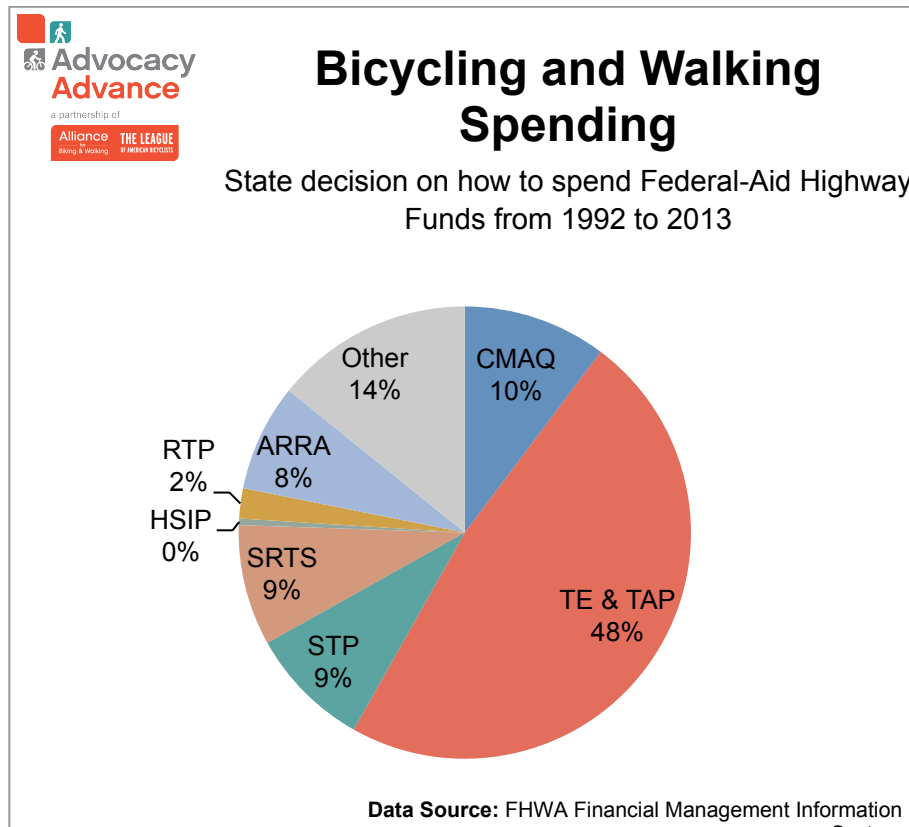
Federal-aid funds used for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian projects, 1992 – 2012 (in millions)

The green line represents the spending for the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, known as the stimulus bill.





Federal-Aid Bike/Ped Spending, 1992 – 2012



Key questions to ask and things to know

Who do you need to work with? Identify key advocates, agency staff, elected officials that you will be working with.

State & local Bicycle and pedestrian coordinators	Who are your bicycle coordinators? State coordinators make sure bicycling and walking projects in regional planning and programming. Local coordinators can facilitate submission of projects to the MPO.
State & local Bicycle and pedestrian committee	Who is on your bicycle and pedestrian advisory committee? Committees establish bicycling and walking as priorities and give input on regional and local planning.
State and local bicycling and walking advocates	Which are the active advocacy groups in the area? Strong advocacy groups are critical to building support and providing information on bicycling and walking needs.
State program staff	Who coordinates the funding program? Each federal-aid program typically has a contact person on the state level with expertise on program details. This person can make sure you stay abreast of key deadline, project criteria, and other details.



Other agency staff	Which other transportation agency staff are involved and influential? With the growth of Complete Streets policies and increased attention to bike/ped needs, the whole range of agency staff should be invested in advancing bike/ped projects.
Elected officials	Who influences the agency? Governors, state representatives, and city council members can ensure that transportation agencies prioritize bicycling and walking projects. Bike/ped projects provide good ribbon cutting opportunities.
The public	Is there public support? Elected officials want to know that there is public demand and support for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

What makes a good project proposal?

Federal requirements & project eligibility	What is eligible for funding? Different funding sources fund different types of projects and for different purposes (e.g. to reduce congestion or increase safety). Knowing these details can help you secure funding.
Project selection criteria	What makes a strong, fundable project? Criteria vary by state/MPO. Knowing what is required and prioritized will help you select and describe a project more likely to get funded.
Examples	Have bicycle and pedestrian projects been funded before? Showing a precedent for funding bicycle and pedestrian projects (locally, nearby, or elsewhere) can help counter arguments that bike/ped projects can't or shouldn't be funded.

When do you need to act? What are the internal and external timelines and benchmarks?

Funding cycles	When are funding decisions made and how often?
Project selection timeline and/or application deadlines	When does project selection take place? When are applications due?
Long-range plan and TIP schedule	When are long-range plans and transportation improvement plans written and updated?

Why is your project needed and why is it a transportation priority?

The need	Why is your project needed? Whether it's safety, congestion, air quality, connecting networks, improving efficiency, expanding transit capacity, or addressing community health concerns, you need to be able to show why the proposed project fills a need.
The benefits	How does your project help the community? Projects need to have documented transportation, safety, air quality, congestion, or other benefits. Be prepared to explain why the proposed project is beneficial. Many programs require benefits to be quantified.



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How do other federal, state, and local policies impact the funding process?

TA match requirement	What is the local share of the project cost?
Complete streets or routine accommodation policies	Does your community have a Complete Streets or routine accommodation policy that requires the safe accommodation of all road users?
Policy on federal funding	What are the federal minimum requirements (e.g. 10 percent TE set aside) and limitations on funding?
Sub-allocation	Does your state sub-allocate funds (especially CMAQ)? Sub-allocation is when states allow MPOs to control federal spending decisions. Small units of government are often more open to bicycle and pedestrian projects.
Long-range plan	Is your proposed project on a long-range plan? Bicycle projects on long range plans are more likely to be funded because it shows they are part of the long term transportation strategy and often buy-in has already been established.
Bicycle Master Plan	Does your bicycle master plan call for the project? Having your project in a local planning documents helps show that it is well thought out, important, and part of an integrated transportation network.