

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2020

On behalf the undersigned national organizations, we thank you for what you have done thus far to help Americans during this time of crisis, particularly around providing immediate aid to transit agencies in our communities. However, much more needs to be done to ensure access to walking, biking, and rolling. With the current transportation authorization set to expire later this year, it is important that transportation – and specifically the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – be a priority in any infrastructure stimulus package, whether that be a standalone package or funding to allow reauthorization to move forward.

As you know, TAP is a funding stream that is the largest source of federal funding for walking, biking, and rolling – otherwise known as active transportation. These funds enable states and communities to access federal resources for safer, more accessible, and economically vibrant streets. The COVID-19 pandemic has confirmed that walking, bicycling, and rolling, while adhering to public health guidance, are critical modes of transportation; we have seen bicycling rates, bike share use, and trail use all increase. Active transportation is providing a way for essential workers to get to their jobs (either alone or together with transit); bikes are being used to deliver food to families in self-isolation; and people are walking and biking, while maintaining physical distancing, to improve physical and mental health.

The positive effects of investing in TAP will last far beyond the pandemic. Biking, walking, and rolling is an important way to address sedentary behavior and lack of physical activity. Physical activity is one of the most important things a person can do to help curb obesity and weight gain, lower your chances of chronic conditions, reduce risk of poor outcomes from infectious disease, and live healthy. Physical activity has been shown to have a positive impact on physical and mental well-being, quality of life, productivity, economic development, military readiness and retention, academic performance and sleep quality. Even small increases of activity make a difference.

In addition, investment in infrastructure will be critical to economic recovery from the pandemic, and this investment must support the building of a safer infrastructure that creates new transportation options and extends those options to under resourced communities. Prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, polls showed that the majority of people would bike and walk more if they felt safe doing so. The increased focus on walking, biking and rolling during this time of crisis is why it is more important than ever to ensure our infrastructure and funding supports safe, robust opportunities for active transportation.

In closing, as you move forward on additional stimulus efforts that include an infrastructure package, whatever form it might take, improvements to TAP and additional funding for active transportation are a critical need now during the pandemic and beyond. We look forward to working with you to ensure strong policies that make walking, biking, rolling, and transit a priority. If you have any questions or need further information, please contact any of the following: Caron Whitaker, caron@bikeleague.org; Margo Pedroso, margo@saferoutespartnership.org; or Kristy Anderson, kristy.anderson@heart.org.

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Sports Medicine
American Council on Exercise
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association

American Public Health Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists
Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (Washington State)
Common Threads
Laurie M. Tisch Center for Food, Education & Policy, Teachers College, Columbia University
League of American Bicyclists
Michigan Fitness Foundation
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Parks and Recreation Association
North Carolina Alliance for Health
Safe Routes Partnership
Sierra Club
Society for Public Health Education
The Trust for Public Land
Trust for America's Health

cc: Chairman John Barrasso, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Ranking Member Thomas Carper, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Chairman Peter DeFazio, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Ranking Member Sam Graves, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee