



# Transportation Alternatives

**What it is »** The original TA program was predicated on the idea that local governments should have decision-making power over a small amount of federal transportation funding for local transportation priorities, such as bikeways and sidewalks. The bill, introduced by Sens. Cardin and Wicker, makes small changes to restore flexibility to the state, while increasing local control to communities.

## *Ensure fair increases in and fair distribution of TA funds*

- » **The Problem:** Under the FAST Act, TA funding is limited to a dollar amount and does not increase as other transportation programs increase. Under the FAST Act, 50% of TA funds go to a state run grant program, and 50% are distributed to communities based on population.
- » **The Fix:** Change TA funding to a percentage, and change the formula so that two-thirds of the funding is distributed by population for a fairer distribution among communities of all sizes.

## *Increase local control*

- » **The Problem:** Under the FAST Act, large Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) with populations over 200k can select projects, but can't obligate funds to projects. Small MPOs, with populations under 200k cannot apply for funds due to a drafting error in MAP-21.
- » **The Fix:** Give large MPOs obligation authority to improve project deliver, and fix the drafting error so that small MPOs are eligible to apply for funds.

## *Improve project applications*

- » **The Problem:** Small and mid-size cities don't always have the technical capacity to put together strong applications and navigate the implementation process.
- » **The Fix:** Give States access to 5% of TA funds to staff the program, and to offer technical and engineering assistance to local governments and manage the implementation process.

## *Give States flexibility*

- » **The Problem:** Several states would like to tweak the program by helping with local match or by suballocating all TA funding to local governments.
- » **The Fix:** Allow states to use safety dollars as local match, adjust local match by project as long as the program stays at 80/20, and sub-allocate 100% of their TA if the FHWA approves of the plan.

## *Ensure local governments can access funds before they are transferred*

- » **The Problem:** Under the FAST Act States can transfer up to 50% of TA regardless of whether local governments have applied for the funding, undermining the local focus of the program.
- » **The Fix:** Require states to run a competitive process, offer technical assistance, and to demonstrate that there were not suitable applications before transferring funds.

## *Prioritize high need areas*

- » **The Problem:** Low income, transit dependent or rural areas have a higher need for safe bicycling and walking infrastructure.
- » **The Fix:** The bill will prioritize high need areas in the competitive process. 21 states already do this. The bill allows states to define 'high need areas.

## How you can help »

**Please co-sponsor the Senate bill to make the Transportation Alternatives program more efficient and effective.**

In Senator Cardin's office contact Andrew Perlstein at [Andrew\\_Perlstein@cardin.senate.gov](mailto:Andrew_Perlstein@cardin.senate.gov)

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