

[date]

[Salutation]

For over 30 years, bicycle and pedestrian facilities have been an important part of the Town of Carrboro's transportation investments. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and greenways allow residents safe and convenient access to jobs at UNC and other places of employment, make it safer for children to walk or bike to school, and give everyone more options for how they want to travel.

The most recent federal transportation bill, MAP-21, signed into law by President Obama on July 6, 2012, established the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to fund walking and cycling projects. This new program consolidates previously established programs such as Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SRTS), and Recreational Trails (RTP).

While the TAP is a positive sign that Congress continues to recognize the importance of walking and bicycling as transportation modes, the Carrboro Board of Aldermen has concerns with several aspects of the program structure:

- Overall funding levels have decreased, when comparing total TAP funding to the combined funding of the consolidated programs under SAFETEA-LU.
- MAP-21 allows states to redirect 50 percent of TAP funding to highway programs that may not address bicyclist or pedestrian safety.
- MAP-21 allows states to opt out of the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This program was a crucial part of the funding for the Wilson Park Multi-use Path, which is now open to the public. The new path connects neighborhoods to Charles Herman Wilson Park and walking trails in the nearby Adams Tract.
- MAP-21 enables TAP funds to be used for planning, designing, and constructing some types of roadways, which may or may not be supportive of cycling or walking.

Comment [JB1]: Staff understand that this opt-out did not occur, thus maintaining the RTP set-aside. (Note that if Congress extends MAP-21, these questions could be renewed for FFY 15 and beyond.

Given these concerns, it is important that the State of North Carolina:

- Do not transfer funds from TAP to other highway programs.
- Fully fund the Recreational Trails Program.
- Provide strong staffing support to administer these funds at the state level, including retaining Safe Routes to School coordinators and maintaining or increasing staffing in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Division.
- Promptly disburse TAP funding as it becomes available to ensure expeditious project delivery.
- Ensure TAP funds are used exclusively for actual bicycle and pedestrian projects.
- Fully spend existing remaining funding authorized under the previous transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU.

Comment [JB2]: See comment above re: RTP.

Comment [JB3]: NCDOT continues to provide a SRTS coordinator who has provided technical assistance and grant administration on several projects and programs.

Thank you for your consideration.