Federal Funding for Safe Routes to School: Evolution Through Three Transportation Bills

A New Program: Stand-Alone SRTS Funding

SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act—A Legacy for Users)

- New program provided more than $1 billion to all states over 7 years
- Funding to states for SRTS infrastructure & non-infrastructure grants to local schools and communities
- Each state Department of Transportation had state-level SRTS coordinator

Combined Funding for SRTS, Walking, and Biking

MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act)

- Eliminated stand-alone federal funding stream for SRTS
- 30% less funding
- Combined federal SRTS program and other bicycling and walking programs into Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Overall 30% reduction in federal funding for SRTS, walking, and bicycling

Continuation of Combined Funding for SRTS, Walking, and Biking

FAST Act (Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act)

- The funding is still known as the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), although official name changed to “Surface Transportation Program Setaside”
- The FAST Act retained most of MAP-21’s TAP features, with a few changes, such as making nonprofits eligible for the funding & modestly increasing the total amount of TAP funding per year

Key features of current TAP funding:

- Funding can be used for walking, biking, and SRTS
- No dedicated funding specifically for SRTS
- Funding is less than total for SRTS, walking, and biking when they were separate programs
- All TAP dollars are awarded through a competitive process by the state or regional bodies (metropolitan planning organizations), with local governments, school districts, and nonprofits eligible to apply
- State or funding recipient must provide a match of up to 20% of federal funds
- Funding can be used for Safe Routes to School infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects, including state and local Safe Routes to School coordinators
- States are permitted to transfer up to 50% of these funds to highway uses

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