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New York Assembly Members, Senators Push for Dedicated Funding for Bicyclist and Pedestrian Safety, Infrastructure

ALBANY, N.Y. – A group of 46 assembly members and senators are asking for funding to protect New Yorkers who walk or cycle to work, school or other destinations. Specifically, they are calling for \$20 million in dedicated state funding within the state’s overall transportation capital plan in FY2017 and years beyond. The funding could be used by communities across the state to build cycling and walking infrastructure such as bike lanes, sidewalks, and multi-use trails. Legislators and advocates point to New York’s high rate of bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities, and the great demand for facilities as justification for dedicated funding.

In the Assembly, 43 members signed the letter circulated by Assemblymember Patricia Fahy supporting \$20 million in dedicated state funding from the Department of Transportation’s proposed \$22.1 billion capital plan, for each of the plan’s remaining five years. In the Senate, Senator Richard Funke was joined by two senators calling for dedicated funding. Both letters urge leadership to include the funding in the Senate and Assembly one-house budget bills. Legislators have been joined by more than 60 advocacy organizations and community groups from across the state, which have signed a separate support letter for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian funding.

New Yorkers for Active Transportation (NY4AT), a coalition coordinated by New York Bicycling Coalition (NYBC), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), and Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC), has been urging lawmakers to add the funding to the state budget.

The push for dedicated bicycle and pedestrian funding comes as a response to reductions in federal and state funding for biking and walking projects, as well as high levels of roadway fatalities among non-motorized users. The New York State legislature passed a Complete Streets law in 2011, however, no new funding for Complete Streets projects has been appropriated, and there are currently no state dollars dedicated for these purposes. Moreover, federal dollars that NYSDOT uses to fund the statewide competition for bicycle and pedestrian projects have decreased significantly since passage of the law – the two most recent federal transportation bills, MAP-21 and the FAST Act, shrank funding for Complete Streets projects by 30 percent from previous levels.

At the same time, safety issues involving pedestrians and cyclists continue to plague communities around the state. In 2014, New York State ranked worst in the nation for pedestrian and bicycling safety – with 29 percent of the fatalities on New York roads being pedestrians and bicyclists. These deaths happen on roads across the state, and they involve New Yorkers of all ages, genders, races, and abilities. Unfortunately, since passage of the complete streets law, New York’s safety record has gotten worse, and the state has actually spent less money on the safety of these vulnerable users, not more.

"Infrastructure and road improvements need to be future focused for all multi-modal users, while spurring economic development with 'complete streets' to improve quality of life, protect the environment, and enhance the environment for future generations. With more pedestrians and bicyclists sharing the road with vehicles, we must provide the necessary and adequate support to ensure all users of the road are safe. Dedicated bicycle and pedestrian funding will look to achieve that and I thank Senator Funke for his sponsorship in the Senate, along with the New Yorkers for Active Transportation coalition for their advocacy," said **Assemblymember Patricia A. Fahy** (D-Albany).

"At some point in our day-to-day lives, almost every one of us is a pedestrian, whether it’s walking to our cars, to the bus, to the store, to work, or to school," said **Senator Rich Funke** (R-C-I, Fairport). "Several communities in my District have already made significant efforts to promote more walkability, but more remains to be done. I’m proud to partner with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and in both houses of the Legislature to ensure those who do walk or bike regularly are part of the conversation when it comes to these vital infrastructure investments."

"In the interest of improving safety and expanding upon the transportation alternatives New Yorkers make use of day-to-day, an increase of \$20 million for each year of the 5-year capital plan is both warranted and necessary. Transportation policy and multimodal legislative and design solutions alone don't build pedestrian and bicycling components, dollars do," said **Senator Martin Malavé Dilan**.

"We thank Senator Funke and Assembly Member Fahy and their colleagues for protecting New Yorkers who walk and bike. New York took a great first step by passing the Complete Streets law in 2011. Now, we need to provide adequate funding so that communities can build the sidewalks, bike lanes, and multi-use trails that make walking and biking real transportation choices for all of us. All communities should have access to the resources they need to fund these projects," said **Parks & Trails New York Executive Director Robin Dropkin**.

"We applaud Senator Funke and Assembly Member Fahy for their support for biking and walking," said

New York Bicycling Coalition Executive Director Paul Winkeller. “As they point out in their letters, New Yorkers who walk or bike to their destinations have been left out of the conversation on transportation funding for far too long. To supplement a proposed state set aside we are asking that state government give priority to federally funded projects that meet Complete Street standards in order to best accommodate the safety concerns of bicyclists and pedestrians who are using our state's 21st century transportation system.”

“As we approach the five-year anniversary of the passage of the State’s Complete Streets Law, it has become evident that implementation of the law has been spotty due to inadequate resources,” said **Veronica Vanterpool, Executive Director of Tri-State Transportation Campaign.** “Without dedicated funding, communities across the state have been hamstrung, unable to move forward with efforts to make streets safer for pedestrians and people on bikes. This is the year that pedestrians and bicyclists need to receive a fair share.”

Access the [Assembly](#) and [Senate](#) sign on letters.

New Yorkers for Active Transportation (NY4AT) is a coalition of individuals, nonprofits and local governments coordinated by New York Bicycling Coalition (NYBC), Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), and Tri-State Transportation Campaign (TSTC). NY4AT seeks equitable funding for non-motorized transportation, including complete streets, community multi-use trails, and safer and increased levels of bicycling and walking in New York’s cities, villages, and towns. Learn more at www.ptny.org/ny4at.

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