

Skimping on Sidewalks

New Jersey's Bicycle and Pedestrian Funding Deficit



Tri-State Transportation Campaign
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Municipal demand for bicycle and pedestrian funding is as much as 10 times higher than available monies.

Summary of Findings

- Demand by New Jersey cities and towns for bicycle and pedestrian project funding exceeds available monies by a factor of 3 to 10 times, depending on the specific funding program and year.
- In recent years, fewer than 40 percent of applications submitted by municipalities for New Jersey DOT's Bikeways program were approved by NJDOT, and less than 23 percent of the funding requested was granted.
- Fewer than 1 in 5 NJDOT Safe Streets to School program applications were approved, with NJDOT granting just over 12 percent of the funding requested by municipalities.
- Just over 12 percent of applications for federal Transportation Enhancements funding were approved by NJDOT, with municipalities receiving less than 10 percent of what they requested under this program.
- The distribution of state bicycle and pedestrian funding going to municipalities is highly uneven when looked at by county.

Recommendations

- NJDOT and the state legislature should adopt the recommendations of the 2003 Blue Ribbon Commission and increase funding for the Safe Streets to Schools and Bikeways programs to \$40 million annually when the legislature reauthorizes the state Transportation Trust Fund.
- NJDOT should re-establish a separate Pedestrian Safety program to encourage improvements in all locations. The Safe Streets to Schools program can be funded in the future with federal "hazard elimination" funding. Traffic calming programs in New York and California already take advantage of this little-known federal program, but New Jersey has not.
- Under the current division of labor, NJDOT's Office of Bike/Ped Programs helps municipalities develop bicycling and pedestrian projects but funding for those projects must be approved by the NJDOT Division of Local Aid and Economic Development. NJDOT should encourage greater coordination between these departments.

Introduction

Municipal demand for bicycling and pedestrian projects has soared in the decade since New Jersey issued its *Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* in 1995. Yet the state is not even coming close to meeting this demand, even as pedestrian and bicyclist deaths remain high.

A Tri-State Transportation Campaign analysis of Bikeways, Safe Streets to School, and Transportation Enhancements funding applications and approvals for fiscal years 2003 to 2005 reveals that less than one-fourth of all applications submitted are approved by the state. And just 13 percent of the funding requested for bicycle and pedestrian projects is granted to municipalities.

From 2003 through 2005, New Jersey municipalities submitted applications for 1,358 bicycle and pedestrian projects totaling almost \$390 million. Yet NJDOT approved only 294 of those project applications for just under \$50 million.

Meanwhile, the state's 2003 Blue Ribbon Commission, led by NJDOT Commissioner Jack Lettiere, has recommended that funding for the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School program be increased to \$40 million annually. The legislature will have a prime opportunity to adopt these recommendations when it re-authorizes the state Transportation Trust Fund next year. With approximately \$15 million in additional federal funding available under the Transportation Enhancements program annually, this change could go a long way toward meeting New Jersey's bicycling and pedestrian investment needs.

"I wish we could double or triple the [school pedestrian safety] program, because we get an enormous number of requests, and unfortunately you just run out of money. The pot's got to get bigger."

- NJDOT Commissioner Jack Lettiere



New Jersey residents want more opportunities to walk and bicycle safely.

A decade ago, New Jersey established itself as a national leader in improving bicycling and walking conditions.

Funding for Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects

A decade ago, New Jersey established itself as a national leader in improving bicycling and walking conditions, committing to becoming “a state where people choose to walk and bicycle. Residents and visitors are able to conveniently walk and bicycle with confidence and a sense of security in every community. Both activities are a routine part of the transportation and recreation systems and support active, healthy life styles.”¹

Bikeways

Shortly after the original Master Plan was issued, New Jersey established two transportation funding programs using state Transportation Trust Fund money to provide state funds for projects aimed at improving bicycling and walking conditions. The Bikeways Program, begun in fiscal year 2000, provides funds to municipalities for the construction of bicycle projects. These could include roadway improvements, bike lanes on streets, separate bikeways, or multi-use trails, among other things. Municipalities must apply for these funds, and applications are evaluated by NJDOT Division of Local Aid and Economic Development. For fiscal years 2003 through 2005, New Jersey provided more than \$16 million in Bikeways Program funding to more than 80 municipalities.

Safe Streets to Schools

New Jersey’s Safe Streets to Schools Program began in fiscal year 2004, though NJDOT had been funding pedestrian projects through the Pedestrian Safety Program started in 2000. Both programs provide funds for municipalities via the local aid program for the construction of pedestrian access and safety improvements. The new Safe Streets to Schools Program has a special emphasis on projects that improve pedestrian safety on routes to schools. Improvements could include the construction of sidewalks, crosswalks, signals and warning devices, and traffic calming among other things. As with the Bikeways Program, municipalities must apply for these funds, and applications are evaluated by NJDOT. Through this program, over 100 municipalities received funding totaling nearly \$15 million from fiscal years 2003 through 2005.

Transportation Enhancements

The federal Transportation Enhancements program was established under the 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) to provide funding for community-initiated

1. NJDOT. *New Jersey Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Phase 2*. 2004. <http://www.bikemap.com/RBA/NJBikePed.pdf>

projects that expand transportation choice and enhance travel experience. To qualify for funding, projects must be one of 12 eligible activities. Bicycle and pedestrian projects garner the largest chunk of Enhancements funding, receiving 45 percent of funds nationwide. Projects that convert abandoned rail corridors to trails receive an additional 8.8 percent of Enhancements funds nationally.² In New Jersey, project applications are submitted by municipalities and reviewed by a multi-disciplinary committee; the Commissioner of Transportation makes the final selections. For fiscal years 2003 through 2004, 41 municipalities together received over \$18 million in bicycle and pedestrian funding from the Transportation Enhancements Program.



Using a new bicycling and walking path in Hoboken.

1. National Transportation Enhancements Clearinghouse. *Transportation Enhancements: Summary of Nationwide Spending as of FY 2003*. May 2004. <http://www.enhancements.org/misc/teedatafy03.pdf>

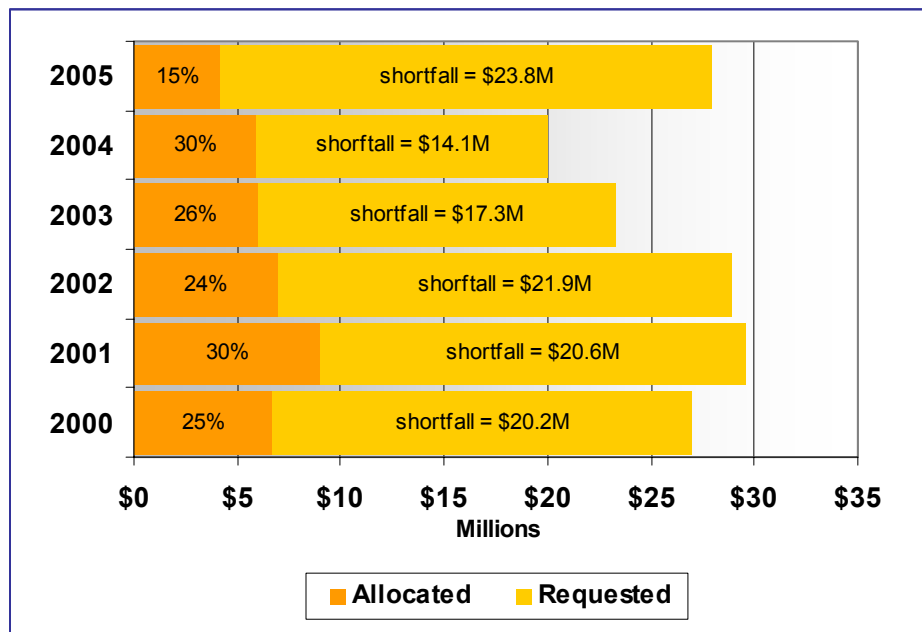
Programs for bicycle and pedestrian improvements have been massively under-funded.

Funding Lags Behind Demand

While New Jersey deserves special recognition for establishing state funding programs aimed at walking and bicycling, these programs have been massively under-funded relative to demand. Since 2000, municipalities submitted applications for Bikeways program funding totaling almost \$157 million, but only a fraction of that, less than \$39 million has been approved. The total shortfall for this program amounted to \$118 million over 6 years.

Our analysis of applications and approvals for the Bikeways and Safe Streets (Pedestrian Safety) programs for fiscal years 2003 through 2005 reveals that the funding shortfall has grown worse over time. Municipalities submitted 270 applications, totaling \$71.3 million for the Bikeways Program during this three-year period. Yet NJDOT approved only 106 (39.3 percent) of those applications, for \$16,070,000, or 22.5 percent of the total funding requested.

Bikeways Funding Shortfall (FY2000—2005)

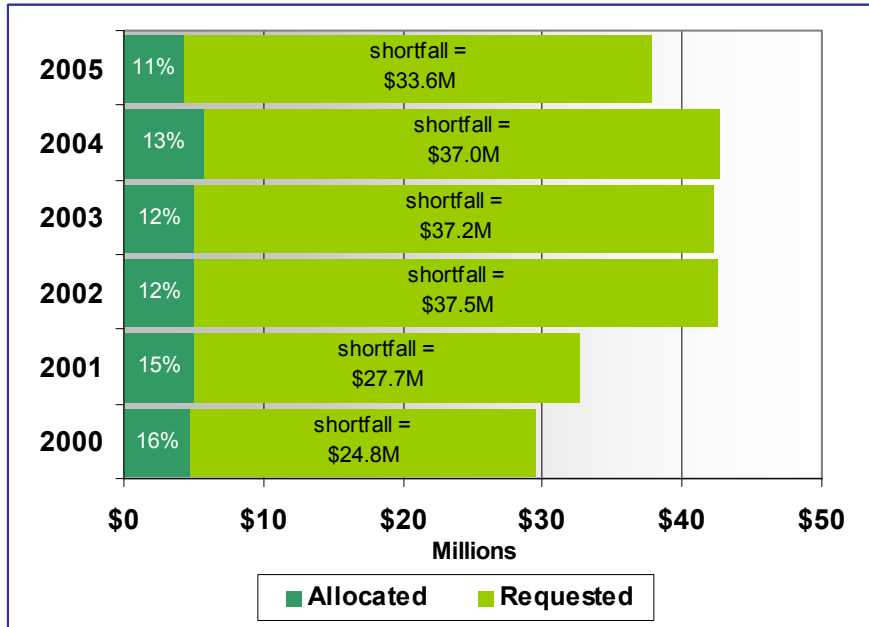


Data from NJDOT Div. of Local Aid & Economic Development. Percentages represent the portion of funding requested by municipalities that was granted in each year.

The popular Safe Streets to School program (formerly called Pedestrian Safety) fared even worse. Municipalities submitted applications for this program totaling more than \$227 million from 2000 through 2005. Yet NJDOT granted only 13 percent, or \$29.6 million of the funding requested. That left a cumulative shortfall of nearly \$198 million over the period.

And like the Bikeways program, the shortfall for Safe Streets to School is also growing. Municipalities and counties applied for \$122.7 million for 720 projects from 2003 through 2005. Of those, 142 (19.7 percent) projects were approved for just \$14,934,000 (12.2 percent).

Safe Streets to School Funding Shortfall (FY2000—2005)



Data from NJDOT Div. of Local Aid & Economic Development. Percentages represent the portion of funding requested by municipalities that was granted in each year.

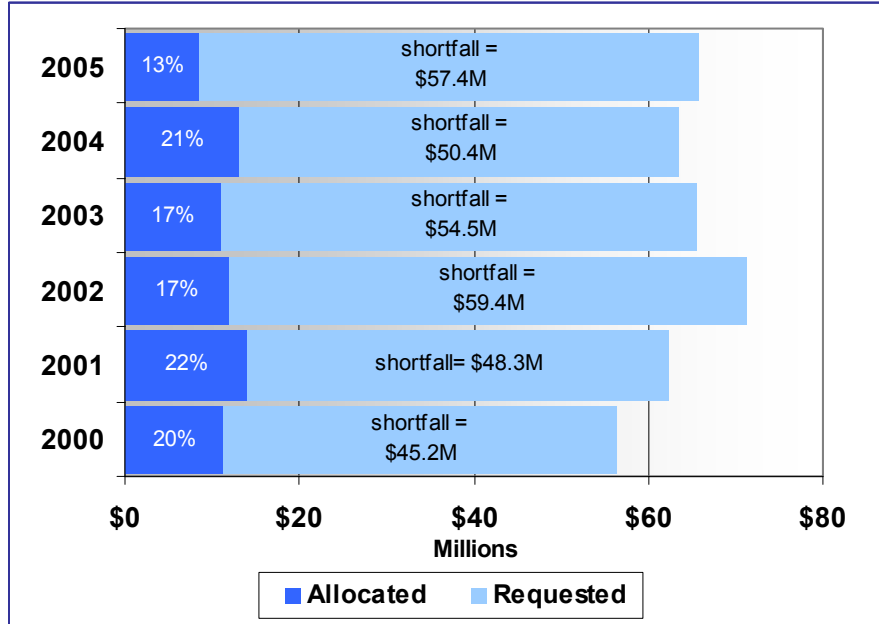
Safe Streets to School: Making the Trip to School Safer

After years of persistent lobbying, two elementary school friends can finally make the 3-minute trip to school on foot, rather than endure a meandering 15-minute bus ride. That's because Washington Township in Gloucester County used \$400,000 in state Pedestrian Safety funding to construct sidewalks near Bells Elementary School, Orchard Valley Middle School, and Washington Township High School. Jackie Callahan and Allison Petruzzelli, respectively 4th and 1st graders when they launched their campaign for sidewalks were later joined in their effort by a high school junior, Alyson Boyer, whose friend was killed while riding his bicycle near school. Together, the three girls convinced Washington Township's Mayor Davidson and other township officials of the need to improve pedestrian safety along routes to schools.

The projects were funded through a state Pedestrian Safety (now called Safe Streets to School) program grant. Washington Township applied for the funding to build a pedestrian tunnel under a busy street. But once the funding was awarded, the township decided that it was impractical to construct the tunnel and asked NJDOT's permission to use the funds to build sidewalks near the township's schools instead. NJDOT approved the change and now Washington Township is well on its way to becoming more bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly. Said Charles Earling, the president of the Washington Township Board of Education, "It's an absolute safety addition, not only for the school district, but the township as well."

All together, the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School programs received \$384 applications from municipalities. But only \$70 million was granted, leaving a \$315 million shortfall.

Total Funding Shortfall (FY2000—2005)



Data from NJDOT's Office of Local Aid. Percentages represent the portion of funding requested by municipalities that was granted in each year.

Just 9.4% of the funding requested under the Transportation Enhancements program was awarded during the period from 2003

New Jersey also receives a significant amount of federal funding which can be used for bicycle and pedestrian projects. The best known source of this funding is the federal Transportation Enhancements program.

The Campaign's analysis of Enhancements applications and approvals for fiscal years 2003 and 2004, reveals that, as with the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School programs, demand far exceeds funding. Of the 367 applications for bicycle and pedestrian funding received, only 46, or 12.5 percent were approved during that time period. In dollar terms, municipalities requested more than \$195 million in bicycle and pedestrian Enhancements funding, but received only \$18.4 million in funding, representing just 9.4 percent of the total requested.

In fiscal year 2005, NJDOT says it has cut funding to the Enhancements program dramatically, citing the inability of municipalities to get projects built in a timely fashion. This is an unfortunate and short-sighted solution to a problem. Working with cities and towns to ensure that valuable projects are built would be more productive than simply slashing funds slated for local projects. NJDOT should extend additional technical assistance to Enhancements and other bicycle and pedestrian program funding recipients.

Distribution of Funds Is Uneven

In order to examine how Bikeways, Safe Streets to School and Transportation Enhancements funding is distributed across the state, the Campaign analyzed applications and approvals from 2003 through 2005, grouping individual municipalities by county. While applications for these programs are submitted mostly by municipalities, and funding is granted at the municipal level, with nearly 600 municipalities in the state, it would be difficult to convey our findings at this level. However, for those readers interested in specific municipal-level data, the appendices at the end of this report provide the funding history for all three programs by municipality.

The distribution of Bikeways and Safe Streets to School funding among New Jersey's 21 counties is quite uneven. For example, of the more than \$2 million requested for Bikeways by municipalities in Somerset County, only one project was approved for \$100,000 during the period 2003 through 2005. In contrast, Gloucester County's municipalities submitted applications for eight projects totaling almost \$1.4 million. Of those, five pro-

While no county fares particularly well, the distribution of bicycle and pedestrian funding among counties is uneven.

Table 1. Bikeways Program Funding History by County, FY2003—2005

County	State Share Requested	Approved Funding	% of Funding Requested Approved	Number of Applications Submitted	Number of Applications Approved	% of Applications Approved
Somerset	\$2,341,033	\$100,000	4.3%	8	1	12.5%
Passaic	\$6,544,496	\$350,000	5.3%	8	2	25.0%
Essex	\$2,025,343	\$150,000	7.4%	6	1	16.7%
Ocean	\$3,587,009	\$325,000	9.1%	21	2	9.5%
Salem	\$945,491	\$100,000	10.6%	4	1	25.0%
Atlantic	\$3,575,022	\$449,000	12.6%	20	5	25.0%
Burlington	\$6,147,005	\$843,000	13.7%	27	6	22.2%
Monmouth	\$5,044,737	\$790,000	15.7%	27	7	25.9%
Cape May	\$5,001,995	\$1,075,000	21.5%	12	7	58.3%
Hunterdon	\$930,058	\$200,000	21.5%	3	1	33.3%
Morris	\$1,309,909	\$300,000	22.9%	4	1	25.0%
Bergen	\$9,316,456	\$2,160,000	23.2%	32	19	59.4%
Sussex	\$1,644,364	\$420,000	25.5%	9	4	44.4%
Hudson	\$8,593,928	\$2,650,000	30.8%	10	9	90.0%
Camden	\$3,672,290	\$1,259,000	34.3%	19	10	52.6%
Union	\$856,686	\$300,000	35.0%	4	1	25.0%
Cumberland	\$1,462,570	\$514,000	35.1%	11	5	45.5%
Middlesex	\$4,892,849	\$2,215,000	45.3%	21	13	61.9%
Mercer	\$1,872,464	\$900,000	48.1%	14	5	35.7%
Gloucester	\$1,394,362	\$870,000	62.4%	8	5	62.5%
Warren	\$150,750	\$100,000	66.3%	2	1	50.0%
Statewide	\$71,308,818	\$16,070,000	22.5%	270	106	39.3%

jects were approved, for \$870,000. Table 1 shows the funding history of the Bikeways program by county for fiscal years 2003 through 2005, ranked according to the percentage of total funding requested that was granted by NJDOT.

Distribution of the Safe Streets to Schools program funding is somewhat less uneven across counties. However, this is because the number and dollar amount of applications so far exceeds the funding available that no county does exceptionally well by this measure. That being said, several New Jersey counties do receive a disproportionately low share of the available funding. For example, Morris County's municipalities applied for nearly \$7 million in Safe Streets funding from 2003 through 2005. Together, those municipalities submitted 48 applications for projects. Yet of those 48 applications, only a single project was approved for \$100,000. The table below depicts the funding history of the Safe Streets to Schools program by county for fiscal years 2003 through 2005, ranked according to the percentage of total funding requested that was approved by NJDOT.

Table 2. Safe Streets to Schools Program Funding History by County, FY2003—2005

County	State Share Requested	Approved Funding	% of Funding Requested Approved	Number of Applications Submitted	Number of Applications Approved	% of Applications Approved
Morris	\$6,847,645	\$100,000	1.5%	48	1	2.1%
Burlington	\$6,587,303	\$370,000	5.6%	35	5	14.3%
Somerset	\$3,929,605	\$245,000	6.2%	33	3	9.1%
Monmouth	\$11,351,755	\$725,000	6.4%	64	7	10.9%
Warren	\$2,399,515	\$185,000	7.7%	22	2	9.1%
Ocean	\$8,547,001	\$740,000	8.7%	49	5	10.2%
Passaic	\$3,628,890	\$380,000	10.5%	25	5	20.0%
Sussex	\$1,979,243	\$209,000	10.6%	17	3	17.6%
Bergen	\$19,815,845	\$2,100,000	10.6%	108	22	20.4%
Union	\$2,029,212	\$225,000	11.1%	11	3	27.3%
Cumberland	\$7,041,912	\$900,000	12.8%	25	6	24.0%
Essex	\$5,353,657	\$775,000	14.5%	26	6	23.1%
Middlesex	\$12,643,368	\$1,867,000	14.8%	49	16	32.7%
Mercer	\$5,055,970	\$784,000	15.5%	44	7	15.9%
Gloucester	\$4,435,707	\$703,000	15.8%	30	7	23.3%
Salem	\$2,041,635	\$359,000	17.6%	12	4	33.3%
Atlantic	\$4,202,054	\$739,000	17.6%	24	7	29.2%
Cape May	\$1,618,432	\$315,000	19.5%	11	3	27.3%
Hunterdon	\$1,849,015	\$365,000	19.7%	17	4	23.5%
Camden	\$6,552,693	\$1,478,000	22.6%	56	16	28.6%
Hudson	\$4,814,545	\$1,370,000	28.5%	14	10	71.4%
Statewide	\$122,725,003	\$14,934,000	12.2%	720	142	19.7%

The Transportation Enhancements program differs from the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School programs in that it is a federally-funded, rather than state-funded program. As such, applications for Enhancements grants are subject to federal guidelines. The review process for Enhancements applications varies slightly from the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School programs, but NJDOT still makes the final approvals.

Like the Bikeways and Safe Streets to School programs, the Enhancements program is massively over-subscribed so that no county has received more than 35 percent of the funding requested by its municipalities. But unlike New Jersey's other major bicycle and pedestrian programs, there are several counties which have had not received *any* Enhancements funding in the last several years. For example, municipalities in Monmouth County submitted 20 applications for funding during the period 2003 through 2004, for a total of over \$11 million. None of these applications were approved.

Table 3. Transportation Enhancements Program Funding History by County, FY2003—2004

County	State Share Requested	Approved Funding	% of Funding Requested Approved	Number of Applications Submitted	Number of Applications Approved	% of Applications Approved
Morris	\$9,749,124	\$0	0.0%	21	0	0.0%
Somerset	\$10,732,316	\$0	0.0%	14	0	0.0%
Monmouth	\$11,361,350	\$0	0.0%	20	0	0.0%
Warren	\$2,902,445	\$0	0.0%	7	0	0.0%
Atlantic	\$9,251,124	\$0	0.0%	22	0	0.0%
Various	\$1,589,160	\$0	0.0%	3	0	0.0%
Essex	\$13,705,807	\$200,000	1.5%	18	1	5.6%
Passaic	\$8,081,560	\$200,000	2.5%	13	1	7.7%
Ocean	\$14,193,921	\$500,000	3.5%	22	1	4.5%
Cape May	\$5,565,860	\$315,000	5.7%	13	1	7.7%
Mercer	\$6,621,486	\$585,851	8.8%	15	2	13.3%
Burlington	\$7,446,204	\$710,000	9.5%	20	2	10.0%
Sussex	\$2,845,419	\$350,000	12.3%	7	1	14.3%
Bergen	\$20,976,233	\$2,625,000	12.5%	40	6	15.0%
Salem	\$3,954,695	\$500,000	12.6%	5	1	20.0%
Gloucester	\$7,947,976	\$1,135,000	14.3%	22	3	13.6%
Union	\$11,521,176	\$1,900,000	16.5%	18	4	22.2%
Middlesex	\$13,856,396	\$2,292,360	16.5%	20	5	25.0%
Hudson	\$13,962,174	\$2,725,000	19.5%	16	6	37.5%
Camden	\$14,637,269	\$2,930,000	20.0%	28	7	25.0%
Hunterdon	\$1,623,313	\$479,000	29.5%	9	2	22.2%
Cumberland	\$2,903,850	\$990,000	34.1%	14	3	21.4%
Statewide	\$195,428,858	\$18,437,211	9.4%	367	46	12.5%

Wanted: Funds to Calm Haddonfield's Speeding Traffic

Head southeast from Philadelphia, across the Delaware River and you'll eventually find yourself in Haddonfield, New Jersey. Haddonfield (population 11,640) boasts a vibrant community and an All-American downtown. *Philadelphia Magazine* named it one of the best places to live in the Delaware Valley.

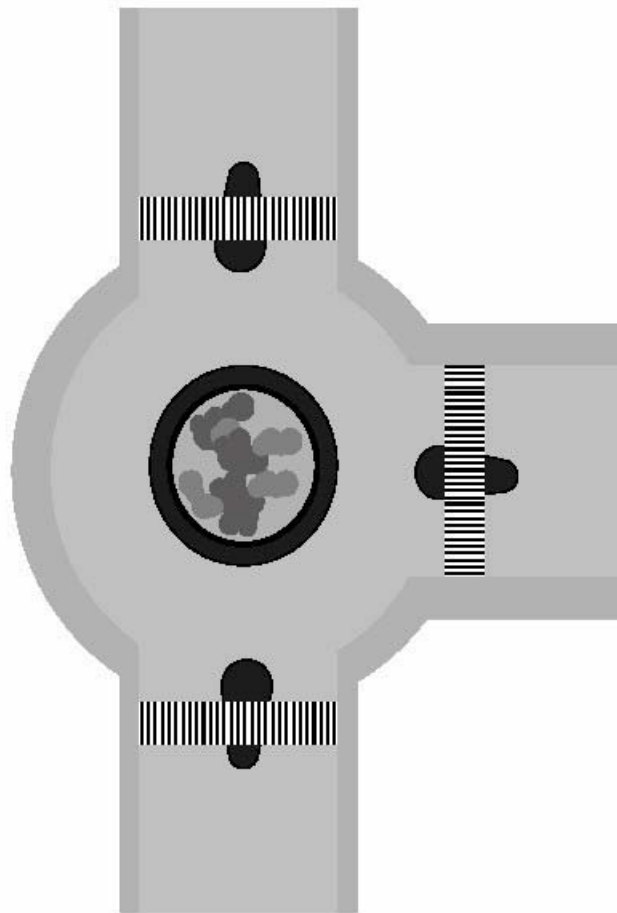
Unfortunately, Haddonfield has recently become a bypass for drivers heading into Philadelphia and trying to avoid the congested main arteries. Concerned residents launched a highly successful public relations campaign to reduce speeding, and more recently have been pursuing traffic calming projects to slow down traffic and preserve the borough's quality of life.

The NJDOT Office of Bike/Ped Programs, through their Local Planning Assistance program, provided Haddonfield with the services of the consulting firm Parsons Brinkerhoff to evaluate and recommend traffic calming projects for the borough. Less than a year later, the consultants had developed a traffic calming plan for Haddonfield, one that includes state of the art improvements such as bulb outs, roundabouts, speed tables, raised crosswalks, signage, and regulatory measures to increase enforcement.

Yet now Haddonfield faces the challenge of securing funding for these improvements. Despite the strong support of the Office of Bike/Ped Programs, as well as assistance from the regional Transportation Management Agency, funding for the projects is by no means a sure thing. The biggest obstacle facing Haddonfield may be that the borough must apply for funding through the NJDOT Division of Local Aid and Economic Development, rather than the Office of Bike/Ped Programs which is already familiar with the project.

Even so, Haddonfield has a huge advantage over competing municipalities. Both residents and elected officials are extremely supportive of the traffic calming proposals. But most importantly, Haddonfield was able to take advantage of a grant from the Office of Bike/Ped Programs to study the need for traffic calming and develop a robust proposal. With competition for bicycling and pedestrian funding fierce, better coordination between the Office of Bike/Ped Programs and the Division of Local Aid and Economic Development could go a long way toward ensuring that a greater number of New Jersey municipalities get a share of the limited funding.

Lincoln Ave./Washington Ave. Roundabout, Haddonfield

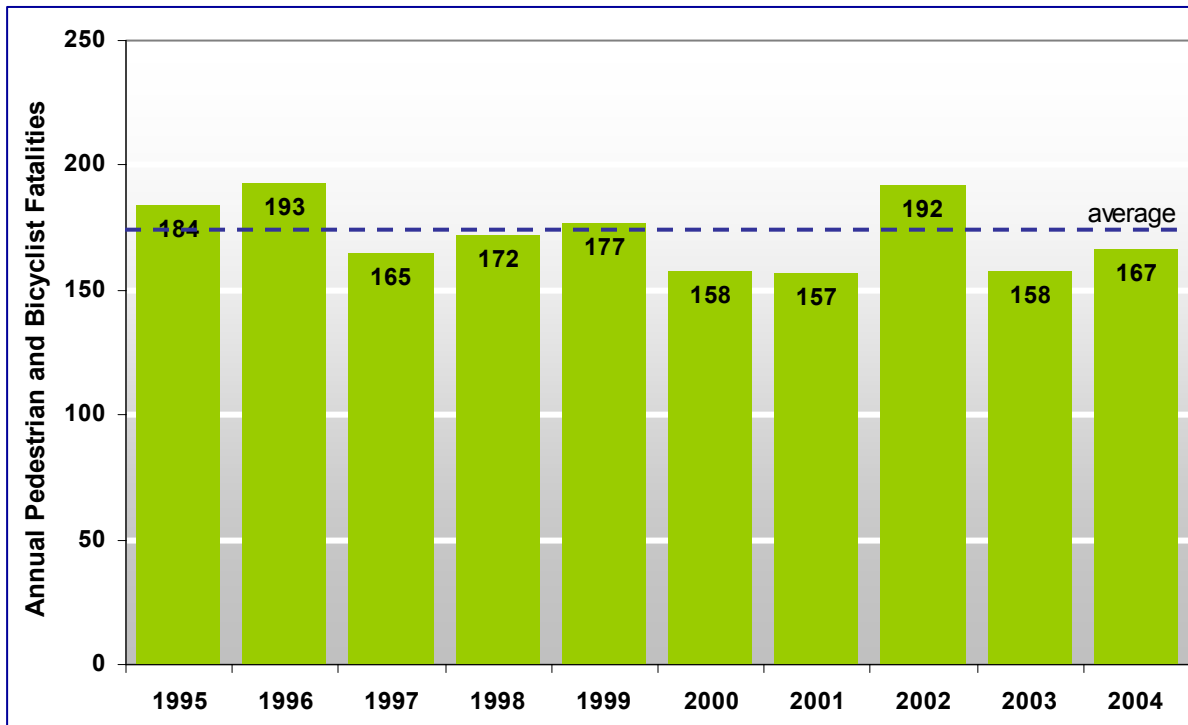


Bicycling and Walking Remain Dangerous

Municipal demand for funding reflects not only a desire to expand local travel options and bolster quality of life, but also the continuing need to improve bicyclist and pedestrian safety throughout the state. Ten years after the publication of the *Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, New Jersey has not become a safer place to walk and bicycle. Statewide bicycle and pedestrian deaths have hovered around 170 since 1995, with 2004's 167 bicycle and pedestrian deaths representing a 5.7 percent increase in fatalities over the previous year. More than 1 in 5 (22.4 percent) of the state's total traffic fatalities in 2004 were pedestrians or bicyclists making New Jersey the third most dangerous state according to the measure, behind New York and Hawaii.

Obviously the state needs to designate significantly more funding to bicycle and pedestrian projects to make progress toward improving this trend.

Trend in New Jersey Bicyclist and Pedestrian Deaths (1995—2004)



2004 data from New Jersey Dept of Law and Public Safety. All other data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Fatality Analysis Reporting System.

Recommendations

Our analysis of the approval rate for bicycle and pedestrian funding clearly shows that demand far exceeds the funding available. Municipalities are eager to embrace the state's vision to make New Jersey "a state where people choose to walk and bicycle." Yet they are hampered in these efforts by a severe lack of funding, and one that is expected to continue in the future with NJDOT's proposed fiscal year 2006 capital program setting aside just \$4 million in state aid, and less than \$19 million from all sources for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

Beyond the lack of funding, some municipalities may also be struggling with the application process itself, as evidenced by the uneven distribution of funds.

Going forward, New Jersey has the unique opportunity to capitalize on municipalities' enthusiasm for the Bikeways, Safe Streets to Schools, and Transportation Enhancement programs to make the state the most bicycle- and walk-friendly in the nation. We recommend the following actions:

- NJDOT and the state legislature should adopt the recommendations of the 2003 Blue Ribbon Commission and increase funding for the Safe Streets to Schools and Bikeways programs to \$40 million annually when the legislature reauthorizes the state Transportation Trust Fund.
- NJDOT should re-establish a separate Pedestrian Safety program to encourage improvements in all locations. The Safe Streets to Schools program can be funded in the future with federal "hazard elimination" funding. Traffic calming programs in New York and California already take advantage of this little-known federal program, but New Jersey has not.
- Under the current division of labor, NJDOT's Office of Bike/Ped Programs helps municipalities develop bicycling and pedestrian projects but funding for those projects must be approved by the NJDOT Local Aid Office. NJDOT should encourage greater coordination between these departments.

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