



# The New Federal Transportation Law: What's the Impact on Safe Routes to School?

Margo Pedroso  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
January 14, 2016



Safe Routes  
to School  
**National  
Partnership**



## About the National Partnership

We are a nonprofit organization that improves the quality of life for kids and communities by promoting **active, healthy lifestyles** and safe infrastructure that **supports bicycling and walking.**

**Equity** is at the forefront of our work.

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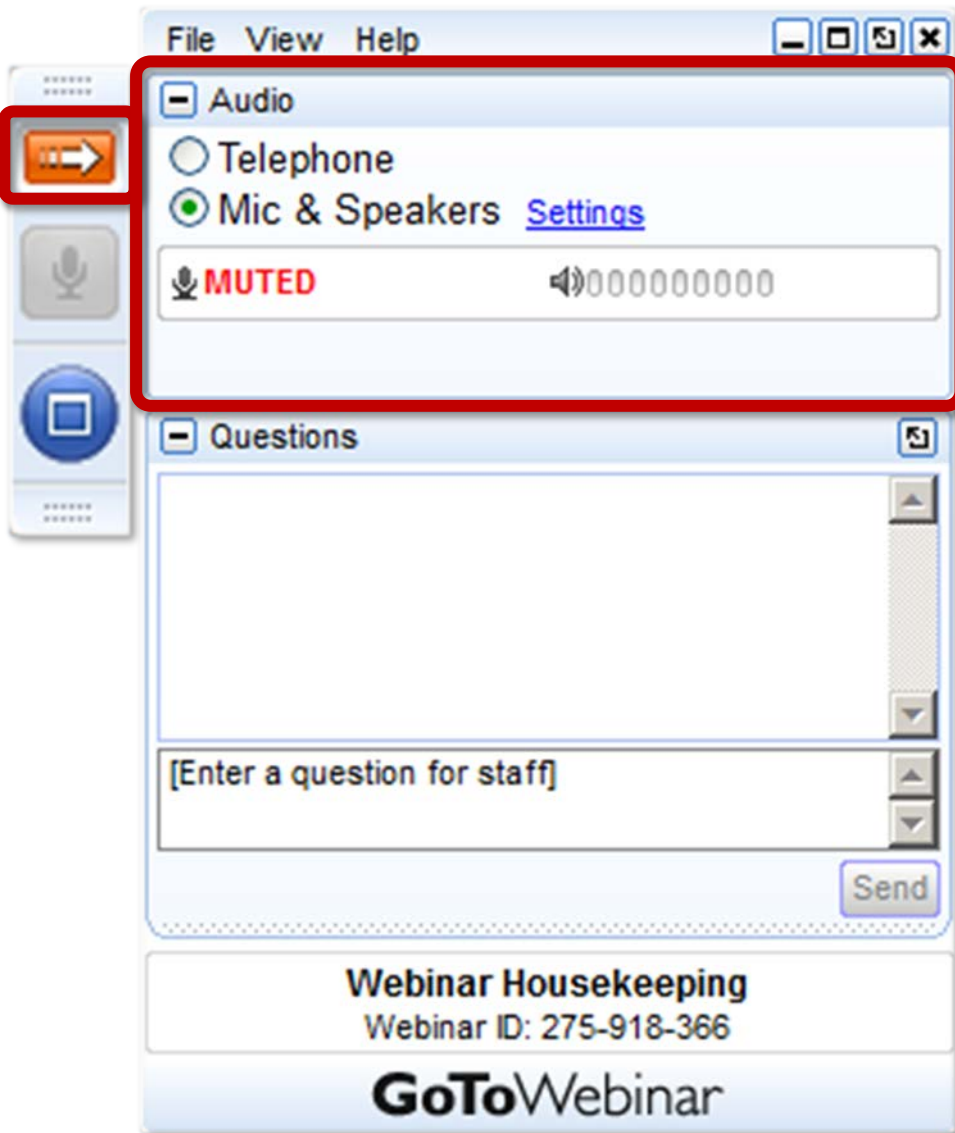
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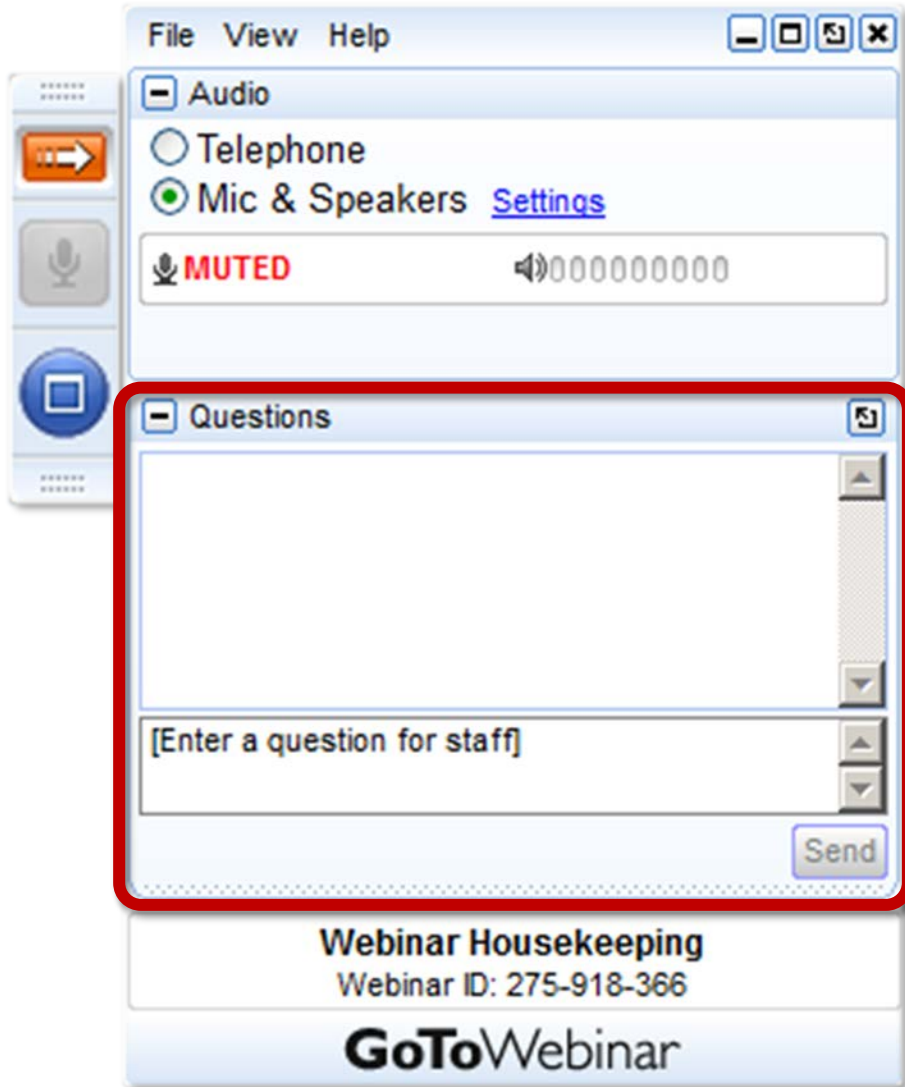
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### Upcoming Webinars

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January 14, 2016

#### **The New Federal Transportation Bill: What's the Impact on Safe Routes to School?**

In this webinar, the National Partnership's federal policy lead, Margo Pedroso, will review the changes to TAP along with other provisions in the FAST Act that provide opportunities for Safe Routes to School funding and policies that make communities safer for walking and bicycling. This webinar will include a substantial Q&A session.

# THE NEW FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION BILL

WHAT'S THE IMPACT ON SAFE ROUTES  
TO SCHOOL?

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Margo Pedroso  
Deputy Director  
Safe Routes to School National  
Partnership



# THE FAST ACT



- **The last transportation bill, MAP-21, ran through September 2014**
  - Was extended 15 more months
  - Major barrier to new bill was funding shortfall (~\$15B/year)
- **FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act**
  - Passed in December 2015
  - \$305B for FY2016-2020
  - Used accounting gimmicks to cover the shortfall
  - If Congress passes a gas tax increase or finds other revenue, a trigger will increase all programs proportionately
- **Was one of the few things that got truly bipartisan support**





# STATUS QUO (MOSTLY) FOR TAP



- **The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**
  - Created in MAP-21 originally by merging Safe Routes to School, Transportation Enhancements and Recreational Trails
- **The FAST Act sustains TAP without many changes**
  - Five years of certainty for TAP=no excuses!
  - Moves it to be a part of the Surface Transportation Program rather than an independent program
  - New name: “STP Setaside” (though states/locals can keep the TAP name if they want)
- **No real changes in core ways TAP functions**
  - Same types of projects eligible
  - Requires competitive process for awarding \$\$
  - Still requires state or local match (20%; lower in some states)

## Eligible TAP Projects

- Bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure
- Safe routes for non-drivers infrastructure
- Rails to trails
- Turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas
- Community improvement activities (outdoor advertising, historic transportation facilities, vegetation management, transportation-related archaeological activities)
- Environmental mitigation (stormwater management, wildlife connectivity)
- Recreational trails
- Safe Routes to School infrastructure and non-infrastructure
- Converting highways/interstate routes to boulevards

# TAP FUNDING LEVELS



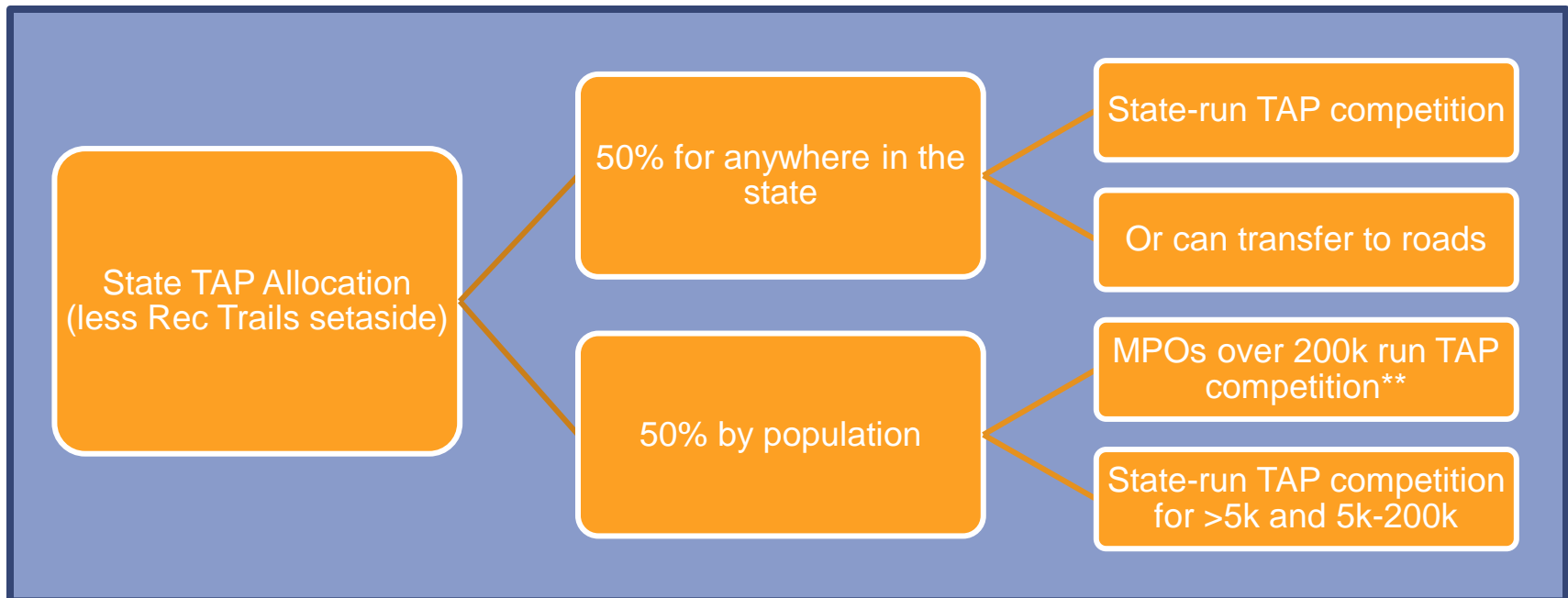
- **Small 4% increase over life of the bill—a victory**

FY15: \$819M

FY16-17: \$835M

FY18-20: \$850M

- **Retains current decision-making split between states and large MPOs**
  - Key change: MPOs can use up to half their allocation for non-TAP projects
  - Non-TAP projects still have to go through competition to be funded



# OTHER TWEAKS TO TAP



- **Nonprofits that work on transportation safety are now eligible to compete directly for TAP projects**
- **More transparency: states and MPOs must report some data on applications and selected projects**
- **Possible future solution for regulatory burden**
  - TAP projects are treated as highway projects due to legislative language—even though they aren't
  - While that provision remains, USDOT is required to issue new guidance identifying ways to speed up project delivery
  - They have up to a year to do so; we'll be talking with USDOT about recommendations



# OTHER FUNDING STREAMS IN THE FAST ACT



- **All other major transportation funding streams like STP and CMAQ still can fund bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure**
  - STP (Surface Transportation Program) now specifically lists Safe Routes to School as an eligible use of funding
- **TIFIA**
  - Low-interest loan financing for local transportation mega-projects
  - Project minimum dropped from \$50M to \$10M and allows bundling of projects – could finance network of sidewalks, bike paths, etc.
- **TIGER**
  - USDOT-run competitive program.
  - Funded by Congressional appropriations process not FAST Act
  - \$500M for FY2016



# OTHER FUNDING STREAMS IN THE FAST ACT



- **Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) can still fund bicycle/pedestrian infrastructure**
  - But non-infrastructure no longer eligible
- **New National Priority Safety Program for bicycle/pedestrian safety**
  - Clearly identifies bike/ped safety as national issue
  - 5% of the National Priority Safety Program (~\$14M) available to states where more than 15% of traffic fatalities are bike/ped (~20 states)
  - Focused on increasing awareness of bike/ped safety laws through law enforcement trainings, enforcement campaigns, education/awareness
  - Governor's highway safety offices likely to control funding; no word yet on when available from USDOT



# DESIGNING FOR PEOPLE



- **FAST Act also includes Complete Streets**
  - States and MPOs encouraged to set design standards or policies that address safety for all users
  - Applies to federally-funded projects
  - USDOT to issue best practices and report in two years on implementation
- **More design options for local governments**
  - More progressive bike/ped designs in the NACTO Urban Street Design Guide now officially recognized
  - Local governments can adopt NACTO guide and use its designs even if their state DOT doesn't for directly received funding (like TIGER)

**Congress has acted...we've got five years of funding...we're all set now right?**

**Wrong: It's time for advocates like you to influence how your state and MPO use the money!**





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## Federal Policy

A key focus of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership is to serve as a resource for Safe Routes to School and related issues with Congress and the federal government and to monitor implementation of Safe Routes to School funding. Because Safe Routes to School affects communities in so many ways, our legislative priorities include transportation, education, health, and the environment.

Below you will find the latest information on the National Partnership's legislative priorities and current federal funding. You can explore the links on the left for detailed information on the current federal transportation law (FAST Act), state implementation, and background on the legislative history. For comprehensive search of our resources, [conduct an advanced search](#) of our resource library.

### FAST Act Background and Resources

In December 2015, Congress passed a transportation law, the FAST Act, that locks in five years of funding for Safe Routes to School, bicycling and walking. Background on the law, the changes it makes to the Transportation Alternatives Program, and its impact on Safe Routes to School is available in our [FAST Act Background and Resources](#).

## FAST Act Background and Resources:

- Safe Routes to School legislative history
- Changes made by the FAST Act and MAP-21
- State funding allocations
- State and MPO implementation models and profiles
- Blogs explaining the local match, messaging Safe Routes to School and other key areas



# RESOURCES FOR MONITORING YOUR STATE DOT



- **National Partnership quarterly State of the States**
  - <http://saferoutespartnership.org/healthy-communities/policy-change/state-implementation>
  - Tracks each state's TAP funding, transfers, obligation (spending) and Safe Routes awards
  - Helps you see which states are moving forward and which aren't
- **Go to your state's TAP webpage to look at funding history**
  - Have Safe Routes projects been funded?
  - If not, work with advocates to recommend changes to the application
  - [http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation\\_alternatives/state\\_contacts.cfm](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/state_contacts.cfm)
- **In March: new report card assessing state progress in implementing TAP and other physical activity policies**

States transfers of TAP funding:

Arizona: 17%  
Colorado: 33%  
Connecticut: 48%  
Georgia: 33%  
Idaho: 16%  
Iowa: 6%  
Kansas: 7%  
Louisiana: 30%  
Mississippi: 9%  
Missouri: 16%  
North Carolina: 22%  
North Dakota: 33%  
Ohio: 10%  
Oklahoma: 50%  
South Carolina: 47%  
South Dakota: 50%  
Texas: 50%  
Utah: 28%  
West Virginia: 5%  
Wisconsin: 33%

# RESOURCES FOR WORKING WITH MPOS



## The Role of MPOs in Advancing Safe Routes to School through the Transportation Alternatives Program

In 2012, Congress made changes to Federal funding for Safe Routes to School that gave some metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), which are regional transportation planning authorities, decision-making authority over which projects to fund. Given these changes, it is important to examine the impact of the role of MPOs on the availability of funding for Safe Routes to School initiatives and to identify best practices. This informational brief explains the changes in the law and profiles selected MPO approaches to support Safe Routes to School projects under this new construct.



### Congress Makes Changes

Congress passed a new transportation law called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) in 2012. This law incorporated the Federal Safe Routes to School program within a new program called the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Until that point, the Federal Safe Routes to School program was implemented by each State's department of transportation (DOT). All States chose to implement Safe Routes to School, with nearly all implementing it as a State-run competitive grant program that supported infrastructure projects like sidewalks, crosswalks, and shared use paths, as well as noninfrastructure projects including traffic enforcement, encouragement activities, and safety education.

**Altogether, nearly 200 MPOs around the country control more than \$200 million of TAP money each year – approximately one-quarter of available funds.**

With the enactment of MAP-21 and the new Transportation Alternatives Program, many changes were made that affected how Safe Routes to School projects were funded. Specifically:

- Safe Routes to School projects must compete alongside a range of other types of bicycling, walking, trail, historic preservation, and environmental mitigation projects, instead of having guaranteed funding set aside.
- Funding for TAP was cut by 30 percent (compared to the previous combined funding for the Transportation Enhancement Activities, Recreational Trails Program, and Safe Routes to School), and States are also allowed to shift up to half of the funding to other transportation projects and priorities.

- Profiles of four MPOs using TAP to advance Safe Routes to School, plus a webinar:
  - Available in FAST Act background page
- You should:
  - Get to know your MPO
  - Understand their priorities
  - Pitch how SRTS fits into those regional priorities (safety, traffic reduction, health, etc.)
  - Look at how TAP is being implemented in your region; recommend improvements if SRTS is not competing well



# TIME FOR YOUR QUESTIONS!

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# Thank you!

