

Pennsylvania House of Representatives
Transportation Committee Public Hearing
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Presented by Scott Bricker
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Alliance for Biking and Walking

Good Afternoon. My name is Scott Bricker, and I am the Executive Director of Bike Pittsburgh, a 1,300 member strong bicycle advocacy organization and a board member of Pennsylvania Walks and Bikes a growing statewide bike/ped advocacy organization.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to speak today.

Bike Pittsburgh and PA Walks and Bikes both work to develop policies and infrastructure that will make more transportation choices available to our citizens and make our communities more livable. We aim to create a transportation system that integrates all modes; one which ensures that Pittsburghers and Pennsylvanians can safely travel on foot, by bicycle, by public transit. I am here today to speak up for these underrepresented modes of transportation and the many Pennsylvania citizens who either currently walk and ride, or would like to walk and ride if only conditions were safer to do so.

As we all know, Pennsylvania is suffering from deteriorating road and bridge infrastructure. But let me add that we are also suffering from poor air quality in our urban areas, obesity, and a down economy. Investment in livable communities — in walking, bicycling, and transit will not only overtime save millions of dollars on infrastructure wear and tear, but also will also get our citizens active and healthy, better our air quality, and help us all save money.

Americans across the board want safer bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. Time and time again, when polled, people say they would ride a bike or walk more often if the conditions were safer and state that they are willing to pay for it. However, in Pennsylvania these modes are often scaled back, cut or not even thought of in the first place when it comes to our transportation projects.

Currently Pennsylvania spends less than 2 percent of its transportation funds on biking and walking infrastructure, even though biking and walking comprise approximately 12 percent of all trips in the state. The time has come to stop treating these modes as afterthoughts and proactively invest in them.

Millions of Pennsylvanians from all backgrounds walk or bike as part of their regular transportation and recreation choice, and the walkers and bikers among us are disproportionately the more vulnerable members of society: our children, the elderly, and the poor. In short people who cannot drive, or cannot afford to drive but who still need safe, viable transportation choices.

We need to make sure that funding is always available for these integral parts to our transportation system and not treated merely as “add ons.” I want to commend

PennDOT on mandating the use of its bike/ped checklist and for issuing its Smart Transportation guidelines and one time funding stream. But more needs to be done to ensure that these modes are not only just fit into a transportation project when they can be, but actually planned for and invested in as necessary components of a complete system.

One way to build our bike and pedestrian infrastructure is to spend the funding that is already available for these projects. The recent extension of SAFETEA-LU ensured funding through December 2010 and restored rescissions enacted in 2009. Funding dedicated to Pennsylvania for Safe Routes to School projects was included in this extension. While many states have moved ahead with a call for applications, PennDOT has indicated that they do not plan to allocate Pennsylvania's Safe Routes to School money at this time. Part of the solution to Pennsylvania's transportation problem must start with the funds that are available today.

As you discuss the future of our transportation funding and the vision of what transportation looks like in our state, I strongly urge you to consider bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure as a cost-effective and integral part of a complete transportation system. Bicycling and walking are good for our health, our environment, our economy, and our communities. Bicycling and walking are good for Pennsylvania.