



## **TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES ENHANCEMENT ACT**

### **Background**

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The Transportation Alternatives program is a set-aside program within the FHWA's Surface Transportation Block Grant program. The program provides funding for states and other entities to plan, design, and construct smaller-scale transportation projects, such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, and community improvements including historic preservation, vegetation management, environmental mitigation related to stormwater, and habitat connectivity. The TA program provides nearly half of all federal funding for bicycle and walking projects. Currently, the program is funded at \$850 million a year. However, local governments request nearly twice that amount each year, demonstrating the need for the program and increased funding.

The TA program has a proven track record of successfully implementing active transportation projects across the nation. However, many communities have expressed concern about the funding formula for the program. Under current law, 50 percent of a state's TA funds go to the state-run grant program, and 50 percent are distributed to communities based on population. In small communities and rural areas, this means funding is often too small for more than one project. Additionally, many small and mid-size communities do not always have the technical capacity to put together strong applications and navigate the implementation process.

### **Solution**

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To address communities' needs for additional active transportation projects, S. 1098, the Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act, was introduced in the U.S. Senate on April 9, 2019. This legislation would increase funding for the TA program to approximately \$1.2 billion. The bill would allow local communities greater access to the program by having states use 34 percent of their TA funding for the state-run grant program and distributing 66 percent of TA funding to local communities. The legislation would also allow for 5 percent of TA funding to be used for technical assistance to help communities with the application process for the program.

### **Request**

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The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) believes that Congress should support a transportation network that includes all modes of transportation. We ask that you support S. 1098, the Transportation Alternatives Enhancement Act, and work to introduce companion legislation in the House of Representatives.