



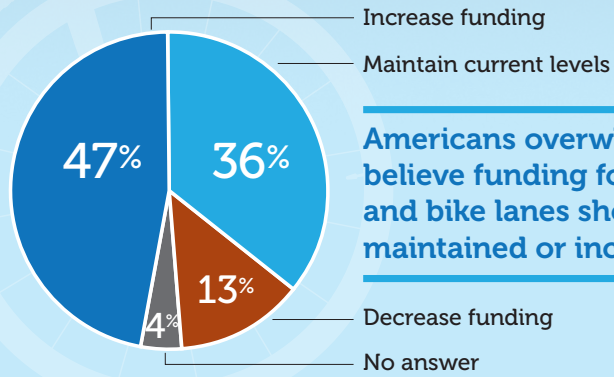
National Poll: Americans Support Funding for Sidewalks and Bikeways



Bike lanes, bike paths, and sidewalks are resoundingly popular as bicycling continues to grow. So why is Congress trying to single out and eliminate biking and walking programs?

"It is important that communities continue to have access to federal resources to implement transportation improvements such as biking and pedestrian infrastructure that are meaningful to public safety, economic development, and quality of life at the local level." - Senator Thad Cochran (MS)





Americans overwhelmingly believe funding for sidewalks and bike lanes should be maintained or increased

As bicycling grows in popularity, gas prices soar, and Congress contemplates new transportation laws, a new survey finds that the overwhelming majority of Americans want to maintain or increase federal funding for biking and walking.

Princeton Survey Research Associates International asked 1,003 adults in the United States about their opinions on federal funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths. The results were astounding: 83 percent of respondents support maintaining or growing the federal funding

streams that pay for sidewalks, bikeways, and bike paths.

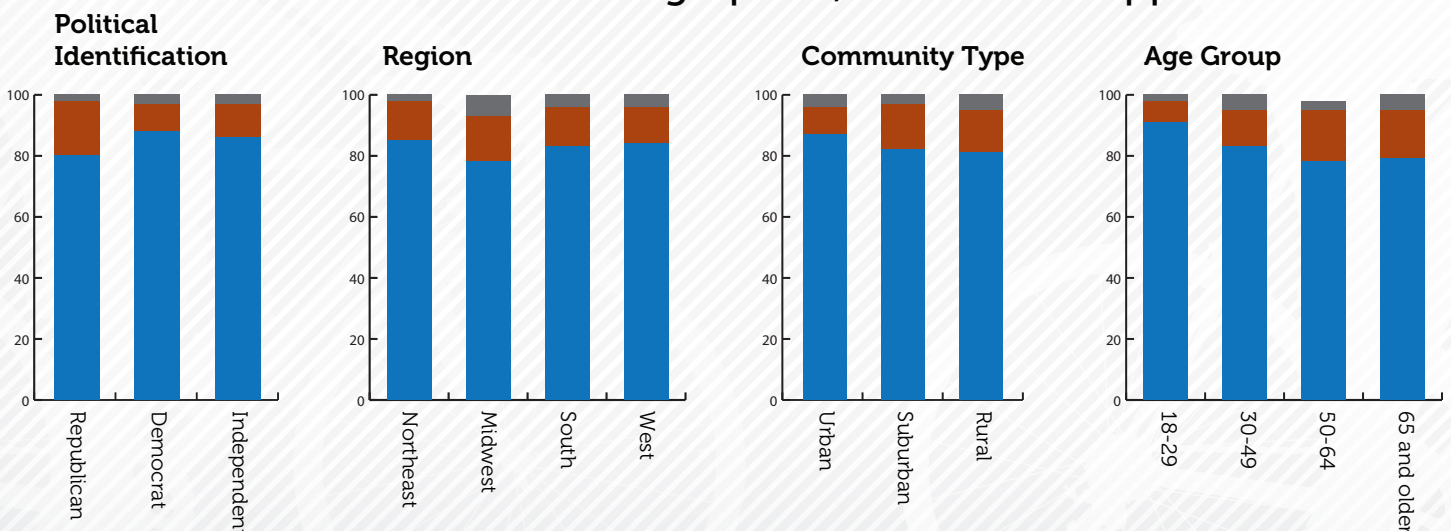
More and more Americans are turning to biking for transportation on a daily basis. In 2009, Americans took 4 billion bike trips, and the number of bicycle commuters has grown by 43% since 2000. Rising gas prices are causing many more Americans to consider bicycling a cost-saving, healthy alternative to driving.

Congress has successfully passed three new transportation bills since 1991, and each time has dedicated a small amount of funding for state and local governments to build sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths. Such spending grew as more Americans took some trips without a car.

Yet now, as Congress struggles to agree on a new transportation law, many lawmakers have zeroed in on eliminating funding for biking and walking as a wishful solution to our country's fiscal woes, though cutting these critical but small programs has virtually no impact on the federal deficit. Currently, only 1.5% of federal



Across demographics, Americans support maintaining



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transportation spending funds sidewalks and bikeways. In contrast, biking and walking make up 12% of all trips and bikers and pedestrians represent 14% of all traffic fatalities. Eliminating the tiny percentage of funding for bicycling and walking projects will worsen the existing discrepancy between funding, safety, and number of trips made by foot and bike.

At a time when gas prices are skyrocketing and biking is rising in popularity, Americans want Congress to maintain or increase—not cut—the programs that fund sidewalks and bikeways. Congress has not yet agreed on a new transportation bill, although current law expired in 2009. With congressional approval ratings at a low

and a contentious election approaching, elected officials should get moving on a new transportation law and stop targeting biking and walking projects for cuts.

According to the poll, the vast majorities of Americans said that they support maintaining or increasing funding for sidewalks and bikeways.

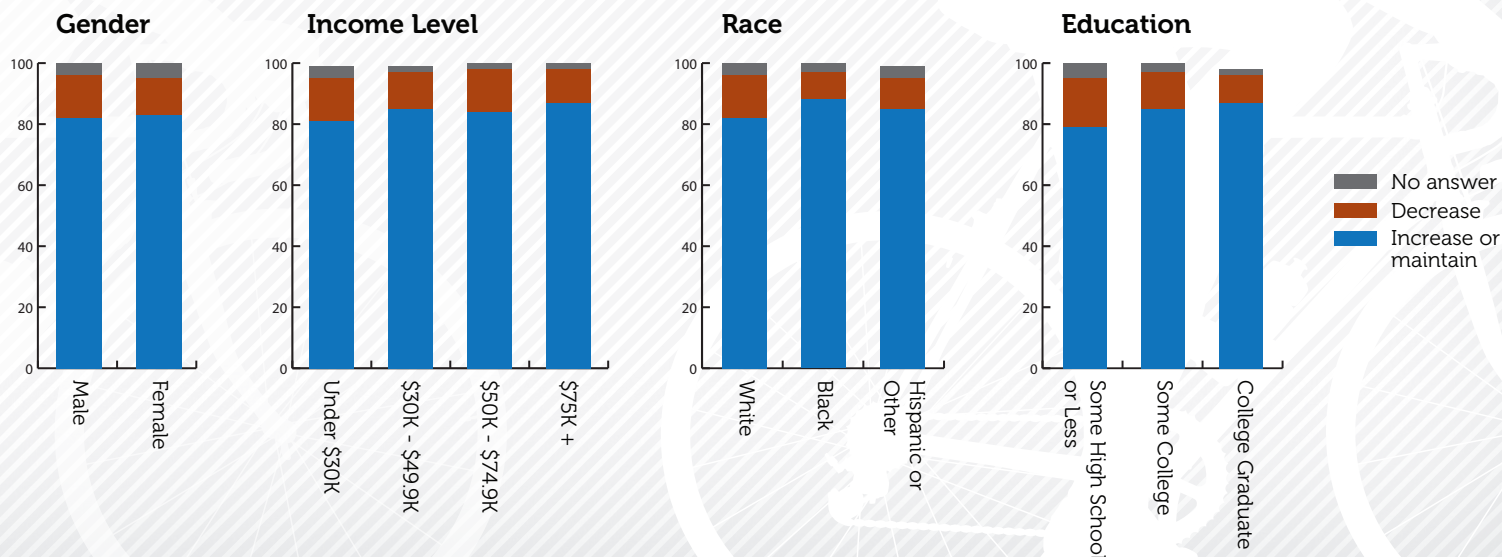
Photo: Cheryl Burnette, Alliance for Biking & Walking



In particular:

- There is strong bipartisan support for sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths. 80 percent of Republican respondents and 88 percent of Democrat respondents think Congress should maintain or increase federal funds for biking and walking.
- Young voters — 18- to 29-year-olds — overwhelmingly support funding for biking and walking. 91 percent of respondents in this age group support continuing or increasing biking and walking funds.
- Most Americans over the age of 50 also support maintained or increased funding, although at a lower rate than their younger counterparts. About 78% of respondents over 50 said they support continued or increased funding for sidewalks and bikeways.

or increasing funding for sidewalks and bikeways



"Especially as gas prices increase, Americans want options that help them save money, spend time with their families, and burn calories instead of carbon. I hope that these new data will remind my colleagues that communities large and small support fully funding sidewalks, bike lanes, and other improvements to make biking and walking safer and more convenient."

- Congressman Earl Blumenauer (OR-3)

"As we continue work on transportation legislation in the House, we should be careful to produce a balanced program which includes sidewalks, bike lanes and bike paths. The transportation and health benefits of biking and walking are important, and it would be a mistake to reverse the progress we have already made there."

- Congressman Tom Petri (WI-6)

- African American, Caucasian, and Hispanic Americans all support sustained or increased funding for biking and walking.
- Urban, rural, and suburban residents all support federal funding for biking and walking.
- Both men and women support funds for biking and walking.
- Americans of all income and education levels say that federal transportation funds should benefit biking and walking.
- Nearly half of respondents — 47% — said that they would like funding for sidewalks and bikeways to increase a little or increase a lot.
- About a third of respondents — 36% — said they would like funding for sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths to remain at current levels.
- Only 13% of respondents supported decreasing funding for sidewalks and bikeways.

Photo: Liv Ames, Alliance for Biking & Walking



Biking continues to become more popular as more Americans replace short car trips with trips on foot or by bicycle. Funding for the street improvements that make biking and walking more accessible and safe are popular with voters, putting policymakers who hope to eliminate biking and walking programs at odds with a majority of the electorate.

Rather than proposing to eliminate the tiny percentage of federal transportation funding that makes walking and biking more accessible and safe, Congress should focus on maintaining and strengthening our investments in sidewalks, bike lanes, and bike paths.

Survey details

The PSRAI March 2012 Omnibus Week 4 obtained telephone interviews with a nationally representative sample of 1,003 adults living in the continental United States. Telephone interviews were conducted by landline (602) and cell phone (401, including 181 without a landline phone). The survey was conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates International (PSRAI). Interviews were done in English by Princeton Data Source from March 22-25, 2012. Statistical results are weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies. The margin of sampling error for the complete set of weighted data is ± 3.6 percentage points.

For more information, visit americabikes.org/2012survey.

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