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House Committee Bolsters Active Transportation in Reconciliation Bill With Funding for Connectivity and Zero-Emission Transportation

Equity and climate sections of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's \$60 billion title of the reconciliation bill offer opportunity to close gaps for trails, walking and biking left by the Senate infrastructure deal, says nation's largest active transportation advocacy organization

WASHINGTON—With passage of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure's (T&I) \$60 billion title of the House reconciliation bill, trail and active transportation advocates are optimistic about opportunities for innovative investments in connected walking and biking infrastructure.

According to Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation's largest active transportation advocacy organization, equity and climate sections of the bill [create new funding eligibilities](#) for trail and active-transportation networks that are essential in delivering significant climate and community benefits.

"This bill represents an admirable effort by the T&I Committee, working with their Senate counterparts, to re-assert their infrastructure priorities around climate and equity—which puts added emphasis on the importance of walking and biking for transportation," said Kevin Mills, RTC's vice president of policy.

Key sections in the bill for trails and active transportation include **Neighborhood Access and Equity Grants** (section 110003), which make available \$4 billion in competitive grants and specify eligibility for regional active-transportation networks and spines connecting between communities, explicitly creating a funding mechanism for active-transportation connectivity grants. These grants can fund projects designed to strategically connect trail and active-transportation systems, making it safer and more convenient for people to walk and bike where they need to go, and providing the infrastructure required to accommodate the mode shift necessary to deliver significant climate and community benefits.

Community Climate Incentive Grants (section 110002) provide \$3 billion in competitive grants for local projects that reduce carbon emissions, including zero-emission transportation options and those that reduce dependence on single-occupant vehicle trips—goals perfectly aligned with active transportation.

"Trails are essential infrastructure," said Mills. "As Congress defines its budget priorities alongside the infrastructure bill, the benefits of walking and biking cannot be overlooked. Active transportation is critical to the economy and the climate, and to creating safe, equitable communities. The bipartisan infrastructure bill includes important programs for trails, walking and biking, but these programs need guaranteed funding to ensure impact. New funding eligibilities in the reconciliation bill create a jumping off point."

RTC's study, [Active Transportation Transforms America](#), attributes \$34.1 billion annually in economic activity to active transportation, with the potential to grow to \$138.5 billion annually as the connectivity of trail and active-transportation networks improves. In addition, the value of fuel savings from shifting short car trips to walking and bicycling trips, using walking and bicycling to access public transit, inducing mixed use and reducing congestion is currently \$3.3 billion annually, which could increase to nearly \$22 billion annually. With substantial mode shift, the amount of CO₂ saved annually could grow to 54 million metric tons.

The [package of bills RTC is advocating for in Congress](#) has been championed by hundreds of national, state and local organizations—representing interests as far-ranging as biking and walking, health, transportation reform, environment, disability rights and planning—and our nation's local elected officials. More than 25,000 people have signed on to a petition in support of RTC's vision. Together, these bills offer critical policy changes to federal funding for active transportation to strategically target investments and maximize the role of trails and other active-transportation infrastructure in contributing to job creation and healthy, safe, accessible and equitable communities.

Learn more about RTC's efforts to inspire a visionary transportation reauthorization bill at railstotrails.org/trailstransform, and follow the commentary on social media using the hashtag #TrailsTransform.

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation's largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).