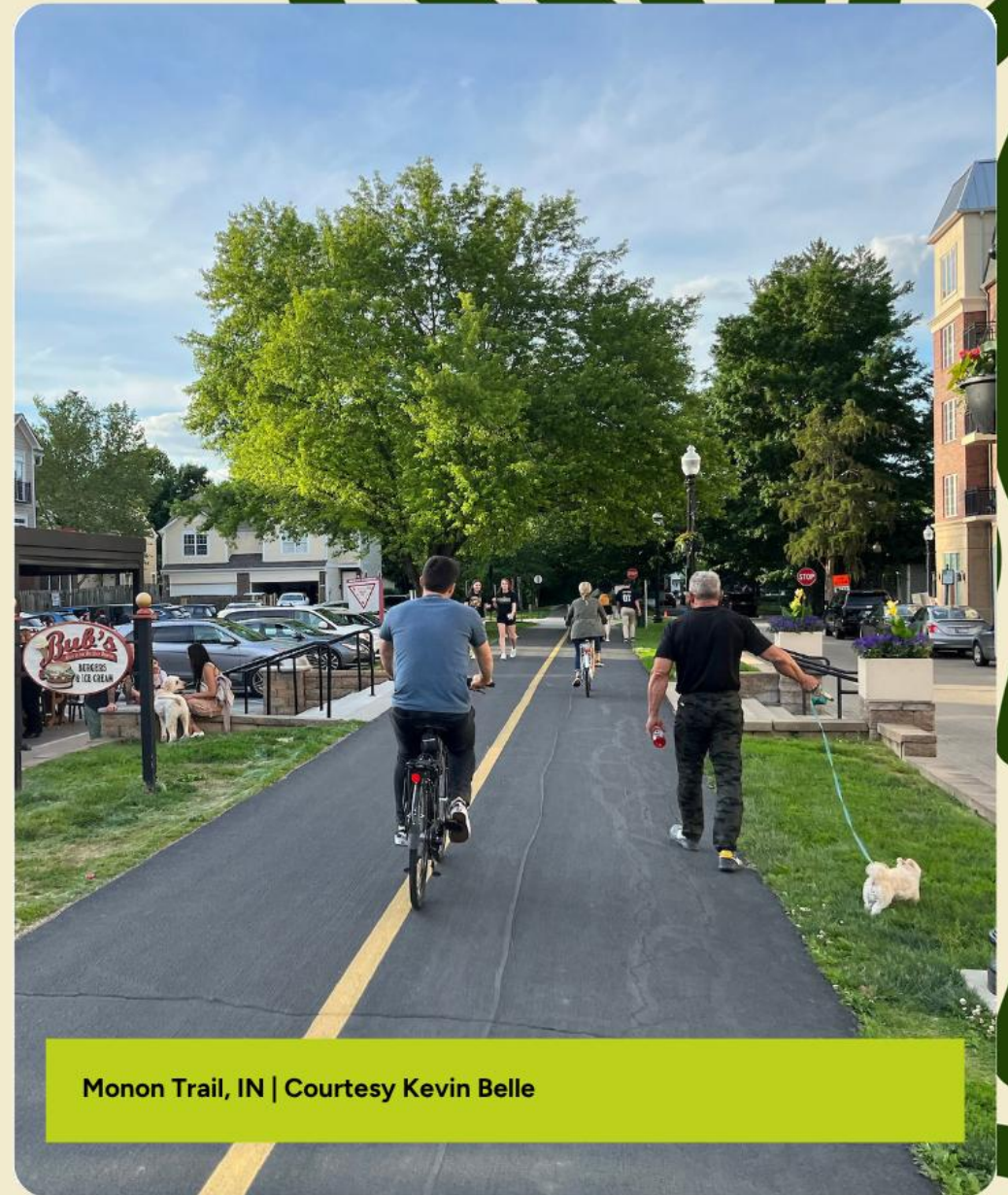


JUNE 2, 2026

The Good, the Bad and the Unknown:

What the House Reauthorization Bill Means for Connected Trail & Active Transportation Systems



Monon Trail, IN | Courtesy Kevin Belle

Before we begin:

- Drop your questions in the Q&A box.
- Live transcription is enabled for this webinar.
- Recording and slides will be made available after the webinar.
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Agenda

1. What is Transportation Reauthorization & Why Does It Matter
2. RTC Policy Agenda
3. Congressional & Administration process and context
4. House Bill: Good, Bad, and Ugly
5. Timeline & Next Steps
6. What You Can Do



What is Transportation Reauthorization & Why Does It Matter

- States implement policies set by Congress
- Provides baseline funding across all states
- Cycle roughly 5-6 years = few opportunities to shift priorities
- Built the Interstates / will build the communities of tomorrow



IIJA Showed Why Reauthorization Matters

- 70 Percent INCREASE in Transportation Alternatives funding
- New Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program dedicated to CONNECTIVITY
- Active transportation highly competitive to deliver goals of new and expanded multi-modal programs
- Resources directed to safety of vulnerable road users



RTC's Reauthorization Agenda

1. Improve **dedicated** trail, walk/bike programs
 - **Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside:** *Improve and strengthen largest dedicated federal funding source*
 - **Recreational Trails Program:** *Grow to match fuel tax receipts from off-road trail users, and add these resources to the set aside so that both RTP and TA grow*
 - **Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program:** *Commit highway trust fund contract authority of \$250 million/year*
2. **Federal Multi-Modal Grants**
 - *Continue multi-modal discretionary grants and use these programs to inform and catalyze ongoing innovation in formula programs*
3. **Hold states accountable to federal goals** (e.g., safety)

Visit www.railstotrails.org/reauthorization for more.

Congressional Process

House (one committee sets most policy)

- Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) – policy for all modes of travel
 - Chairman: Sam Graves (R-MO)
 - Ranking Member: Rick Larsen (D-WA)
- Energy and Commerce – vehicle safety and design
- Ways and Means – funding

Senate (3 committees set policy)

- Environment and Public Works (EPW) trails and highways
 - Chair: Shelly Moore Capito (R-WV)
 - Ranking Member: Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)
- Commerce, Science, & Transportation –discretionary programs and vehicles
- Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs – Public transit
- Finance – funding

Contrasting Policy Themes

Last reauthorization (IIJA, 2021) aimed to address growing needs:

- Invest in climate, safety, and equity
- Foster multi-modal transportation with more mobility options
- Initiate new programs & larger direct federal role (but formula still dominates)

Committee Chairs now aim to go *back to the future*:

- Give \$ to states with flexibility (without accountability)
- Re-emphasize building highways
- Project 2025: walking and biking not the federal role (devolution)
- Consolidate programs (TA and RTP were in 2012)

BUILD America 250 Act - What it Means for Trails, Walking and Biking

- Protects legacy active transportation programs
- Policy changes make it harder to build out connected active transportation infrastructure



BUILD America 250 Act - What it Means for Trails, Walking and Biking

Topline Summary

IN: Transportation Alternatives: remains as a 10% set-aside of the surface transportation block grant (STBG); program grows slowly, opportunity for lower federal match

IN: Recreational Trails Program (RTP): \$84 million despite \$281 million in gas tax receipts paid by motorized trail users.

IN: Safe Streets and Roads for All ramps up at an average per year of \$750 million, a decrease from current funding.

OUT: Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP): repealed

NEW: Surface Transportation Accelerator Grants (STAG): new program, wide variety of eligibilities, \$2.4 billion annually



BUILD America 250 - Good

Transportation Alternatives (TA):

- Continues as a 10% STBG set aside and increases funding **to an average of \$1.66 billion per year** (+10.8% over baseline).
- Reduces barriers to using this program by allowing HSIP funding to be used as the local match.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP):

- Continues the program, allows e-bikes on non-motorized trails if state and local regulations permit.

Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A):

- Provides an annual average of \$750 million in guaranteed funding

BUILD America 250 - Bad

Transportation Alternatives (TA):

- Reopens the flood gates to transfers by removing the requirement that states demonstrate a lack of demand and allowing states to self-certify the legitimacy of their own transfers.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP):

- Funding level persists at \$84 million annually.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment (ATIIP)

- Repeals the only program dedicated to large grants

BUILD America 250 - Bad (cont.)

Safe Streets and Roads For All (SS4A):

- Reduces overall funding for SS4A compared to current law.

Repeals or does not invest in Key Programs:

- Carbon Reduction Program, Neighborhood Access and Equity, Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD), Reconnecting Communities Program (RCP), Promoting Resilient Operations, for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost Saving Transportation (PROTECT) formula

No meaningful accountability: Formula programs are generally unchanged without accountability to national goals (eg. safety)

- **Consolidated Funding Pilot Program:** allows ten states to get formula funding without a TA set aside, undermining program in the long term.

BUILD America 250 -Unknown

Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG)

- \$2.4 billion new discretionary program
- Three categories: Rural (1/4 of funding), Urban (1/4 of funding) and Local and Regional (1/2 of funding)
- Trails, biking and walking compete with all other eligible project types.
- Not a suitable substitute for dedicated funding such as ATIP.

Bridge Programs

- Formula and discretionary programs new bridges and maintenance.
- Lack of clear eligibility and policy to encourage bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on bridges.

Ongoing Threats to Active Transportation

- Congressional leadership supports providing states with more flexibility, consolidating or eliminating programs that support biking and walking
- Supporters of active transportation may not make it a priority (and did not in the BUILD 250 markup)
- Grant cancellations, delays, and modifications
- Language – “hostile to motor vehicles,” “traditional highway bill,” etc.
- Administration signals to Congress – controlled by the same party – about priorities.



Courtesy Ra

Timeline

- Infrastructure Investment And Jobs Act (IIJA, current law) expires on September 30, 2026
 - Congress must pass a new law or extend IIJA (extensions are common)
- House Transportation Committee approved BUILD America 250, now pending before Full House
- Senate EPW Committee markup in late spring/summer 2026
- What happens next: IIJA extension highly likely
 - Disagreement between House and Senate likely on policy
 - Uncertainty about how to fund any new law (highway trust fund is insolvent)
 - Limited time remaining on the Congressional calendar and mid term elections are soon
 - Transportation is not a priority for either chamber or the Administration

Why Engagement Matters Now

- What Congress writes today, will be the start of negotiations tomorrow
- Committees will consider and vote on policies even if a new law is not finalized
- What the committees approve will be the foundation for negotiations in the future: this has happened before - current law (IIJA) largely written years prior

Essential to make our voices heard now and show support for the programs that support trails, biking and walking



RTC's Reauthorization Tactics

- Release policy agenda: <http://railstotrails.org/reauthorization>
- Meet with Member and committee staff; help develop and advocate for legislative proposals
- Build consensus & collaborate with partners – letters to Congress with business, civic leaders & local elected officials on 1) TA, Safety, Eligibility (over 1100 signers); 2) ATIIP (261 signers)
- Engaged local, state and national allies to amplify requests - local sign on letters to key committee members; influential individuals meet members
- Cultivate grassroots engagement nationwide and in key states and districts
- Engage media to uplift issues and themes that can shape political optics

Advocacy Needed Now: Make a Plan

- The time is now to meet with Congress: tell them why active transportation matters and invite them out on the trail
- Engage agencies and other stakeholders to advocate
- Officials hear about many issues, and your voice is needed to keep this top of mind for officials
- RTC is here to help partner with you to make these meetings happen



Q&A