

# Call on Governor Shapiro to Accelerate Pennsylvania's Connected Active Transportation Infrastructure



February 2023

Dear Governor Shapiro,

Our organizations call upon you and your administration to take concrete actions to accelerate active transportation in the Commonwealth.

# **Call on Governor Shapiro to Accelerate Pennsylvania's**

## **Connected Active Transportation Infrastructure**

Trail and active transportation networks are essential infrastructure for equitably addressing the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvania--economic development, climate resiliency, mobility, and bicyclist and pedestrian safety. Trails, sidewalks and protected bike lanes that are well connected to each other, our neighborhoods, transit networks, and the places we need to go are critical for making it safe and convenient for Pennsylvanians to have equitable access to transportation whether or not they drive a car.

Pennsylvania is home to world-class multi-use trails and several developing trail and active transportation networks, spearheaded by local champions working to overcome funding and development challenges: the Circuit Trails serving Greater Philadelphia, the Link Trail Network serving Lehigh Valley, the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition serving western Pennsylvania, and the Triple Divide Trail connecting Lake Ontario to the Susquehanna River. Several long-distance trails--the Great Allegheny Passage, the East Coast Greenway, and the Great American Rail-Trail--connect Pennsylvania with surrounding states, creating powerful economic and tourism potential.

Despite this progress, the pace of active transportation infrastructure development is very slow in Pennsylvania and local advocates and municipalities are working against significant obstacles. Investments in active transportation infrastructure, connectivity and maintenance are not prioritized by any state agency. The state's most vulnerable road users in the transportation system, pedestrians and bicyclists, are growing disproportionately as a percentage of the number of people killed and severely injured annually. The transportation sector is the Commonwealth's third largest contributor of greenhouse gasses. There is a compelling need to invest in infrastructure that will make it easier and safer for people to walk and bike, shifting trips to non-motorized modes.

The trail, biking and walking advocacy community calls upon Governor Shapiro to prioritize the connectivity of trail and active transportation networks, incentivizing the acceleration and maintenance of this infrastructure to make it safer, more accessible, and more convenient to walk and bike; to encourage people to swap car trips for walking and biking trips; to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector; and to generate equitable economic and quality-of-life opportunities for Pennsylvanians.

In order to accelerate trail and active transportation networks, we call upon Governor Shapiro to:

1. Issue an executive order articulating how Pennsylvania's active transportation networks advance the Governor's vision for infrastructure, and call for the prioritization of active transportation networks as part of the state's infrastructure planning.
2. Commit to a dedicated funding program and a new agency bureau for planning, building and maintaining active transportation networks.

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3. Build on past and ongoing efforts to enhance inter-agency cooperation on active transportation, like the current Safe Routes to Parks State Accelerator Program, by creating an inter-agency plus stakeholder task force, that includes PA Departments of Transportation, Health, Community & Economic Development, Conservation & Natural Resources, Environmental Protection, and Aging, and charge that group to:
  - Develop an Active Transportation Network Implementation Plan (the Plan) by December 2023 that details how state programs and budgets will be structured, coordinated and integrated to both implement the 2019 Active Transportation Plan and to advance the Governor's vision for Pennsylvania's active transportation networks.
  - Recommend new legislation, funding sources, reorganized and new agency structures, and policies to achieve the Plan by December 2023
  - Report to the Governor annually on progress being made by state agencies on the Active Transportation Network Implementation Plan such as the number and scope of capital projects funded, miles of Active Transportation infrastructure constructed and the number of people served and their counties.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act presents a historic opportunity to transform Pennsylvania's transportation infrastructure. Those funds are particularly targeted to equity and active mobility options, especially when connecting to transit. However, Pennsylvania will only succeed in revolutionizing active transportation if we make a concerted effort to do so. Pennsylvania must commit to mode shift (moving more people out of cars and away from long drives) in order to reduce pressure on its highway and road systems and open up funds for trails, greenways, sidewalks, and shared-use paths, connected to each other and to transit.

The undersigned organizations commit to work with the state agencies to support and further this monumental effort. Together we can make Pennsylvania a place where everyone has safe, healthy, accessible, and inviting mobility options, no matter their age, race, income, ability, or zip code.

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## **Call on Governor Shapiro to Accelerate Pennsylvania's Connected Active Transportation Infrastructure**

Director of State-Level Policy  
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