

**2013 NYS Joint Legislative Budget Hearing, Transportation**  
**Testimony of Brian Kehoe**  
**On Behalf of**  
**NY Bicycling Coalition**  
**January 31<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Brian Kehoe, and I am the Executive Director of the New York Bicycling Coalition. NYBC advocates for the rights of all bicyclists and pedestrians throughout New York State by supporting safety, education, and access for road and trail users. I am also proud to speak on behalf of **New Yorkers for Active Transportation (NY4AT)** which is a large, new and broadly representative coalition that works with stakeholders to assure equitable funding for non-motorized transportation.

In New York, more and more people are realizing the benefits of walking and bicycling for transportation, exercise, and fun. Improved pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure can help make our roads safer, while encouraging New Yorkers to choose healthier transportation options. Maximizing available funds for non-motorized transportation will also help the state to achieve its goals of smart growth and reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

We must ensure that people can travel safely to destinations. New York continues to have one of the highest bicycle and pedestrian fatality rates in the nation. The most recent data available for New York State indicates that total injuries to bicyclists resulting from collisions with motor vehicles jumped significantly from 5,405 in 2009 to 6,058 in 2010. The number of bicyclist fatalities similarly rose from 29 to 36. Pedestrian injury rates continue to be high as well, increasing from 15,321 (2009) to 16,090 (2010). Significantly, last year New York State was ranked #42 in Bike Friendliness by the League of American Bicyclists.

**Funding for Pedestrian and Bicycling Infrastructure**

Improvements to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure help everyone. This money gets spent locally, improves the safety of our roads and sidewalks, which we all use, and makes our communities better places to live. With leadership from NYSDOT and utilization of available funding, New York can meet the safety needs of all road users.

In 2011, with the leadership of Senator Fuschillo and Assemblyman Gantt, New York State passed a Complete Streets law. The intention of the law was to assure that our roads will be built for all users, not just those who drive cars. Nearly a year after the law went into effect New Yorkers are still awaiting policies and procedures by which the law will be implemented. Since passage of the law, funding options to implement Complete Streets have become increasingly threatened:

1. Federal moneys, in the form of three core programs have, for the last 20 years, funded most bicycle and pedestrian projects. These three core programs, Recreational Trails, Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to Schools are now consolidated into one new program called Transportation Alternatives. Unfortunately, these funds—

which are already a tiny percentage of all federal transportation dollars—have shrunk by roughly 33 percent under MAP-21. And states now also have the option of diverting half of these funds to non-bicycle & pedestrian projects.

2. This year, NYS DOT changed the criteria for the Marchiselli Program, which used to provide key state dollars for federal-aid projects. Now, it is unlikely that new pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure will be eligible for these crucial state funds. This leaves municipalities and counties responsible for 20% of the cost of their projects, and consequently, increases the likelihood that federal dollars will be left on the table.

Today, we ask that the legislature commit to maintaining a modest, but crucially important level of funding so that communities will still have the option to build sidewalks, bike lanes and trails, if they want to. This commitment can be achieved by adding a line to the budget dedicated to pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure. However, if the legislature would prefer to work within the parameters of the proposed Executive Budget, we urge you to add article VII language that would assure some portion of the \$300 million proposed for the NY Works fund be dedicated to non-motorized transportation infrastructure. Last year, NY Works spent \$1 billion for transportation projects; almost none of that money went to pedestrian and bicycling facilities.

New York Work's funds aim to foster economic development. Strengthening villages, towns and cities with high-quality pedestrian and bicycling facilities is a very effective and efficient path to that goal. Indeed, each \$1 million of spending on pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure creates at least 9.6 jobs, while road-only projects create just 7.8 jobs.

We also ask that the Senate and Assembly work with the NYS Department of Transportation to ensure that available federal funds are spent expeditiously, as communities of all sizes have large backlogs of walking and biking projects waiting to be built and are eagerly awaited by the public.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.