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Source: Miller, S. and Coutts, C.
(2018) A multiple case study of local
& creative financing of bicycle and
pedestrian infrastructure. Cases
studies on Transport Policy, 6:257-
264.

Available [here](#)

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Local and creative financing for bike and pedestrian infrastructure

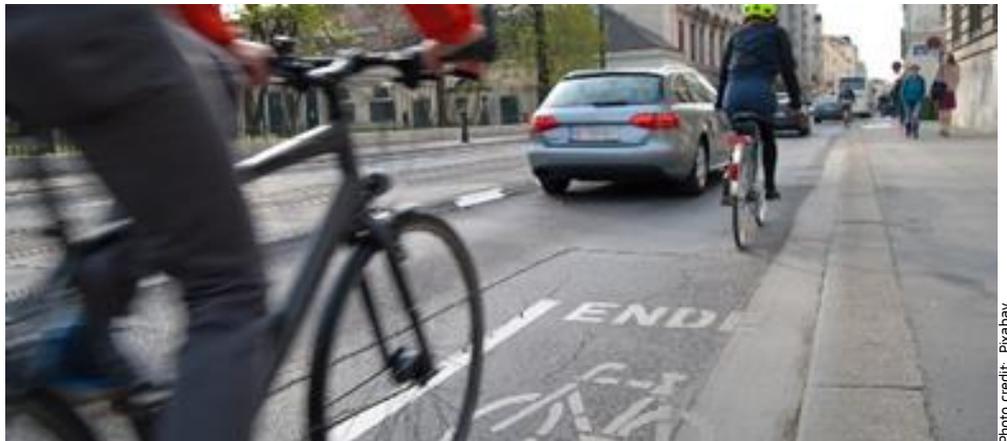


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Improving bike and pedestrian infrastructure is complementary to health and sustainability goals. This study examines a number of alternative funding mechanisms that have been used in US cities, and makes recommendations that are applicable to Europe.

Creating and improving infrastructure that encourages walking and cycling is critical to goals of health and sustainability. However, bike and pedestrian infrastructure projects can go unfunded when such initiatives are put against real-life trade-offs and resistance to the status quo. This study examines a number of ways US cities are financing bike and pedestrian infrastructure at the local level.

Crowdfunding is one of the newest funding sources. What began as a way to provide start-up money for new businesses has now been expanded to include civic projects. In 2013, Memphis was the first US city that appears to have used crowdfunding to construct a protected bike path, raising almost US dollar (USD) 75,000 of a USD4.5 million project.

This study examined a number of local mechanisms that US cities have used to finance bike and pedestrian infrastructure. Some of these mechanisms have so far been unable to raise enough money to fully fund bike and pedestrian projects. However, they provide other benefits such as raising awareness and encouraging large organisations to contribute. Other methods, such as bonds, tax increment financing (TIF – used in urban redevelopment projects and involves borrowing from expected increases in property tax revenue spurred on by proposed redevelopment) and sales tax can raise significant funds. However, they need targeted campaigning to gain political and community support. These financing mechanisms are also dependent on the state of the local economy.

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Local and creative financing for bike and pedestrian infrastructure

The study found that large projects require multiple funding sources, which adds to the complexity of bike and pedestrian planning, but makes understanding a wide range of financial possibilities more important. Planning across local government departments, such as piggybacking with road resurfacing, may help to decrease costs. For all funding, creating a compelling story to accompany a city's bike and pedestrian vision can help bring together multiple partners and funding sources.



Equity is a legitimate concern related to financing. Therefore, a city should carefully evaluate its goals and responsibilities to its citizens when implementing financing strategies. There are also legitimate equity concerns with using crowdfunding and local donations to fund bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

If citizens do not have the means to donate to projects within their own community, then these communities will be further disadvantaged by their inability to use this mechanism to leverage larger grants.

The study concludes by making a number of recommendations:

- An evaluation of finance strategies and the legal revisions necessary to implement these strategies needs to be undertaken. The evaluation would include whether TIF funding can be used in bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and how to manage funding that comes from outside sources, whether they be partnerships or donations.
- Creating a repository of learned knowledge about alternative funding sources may allow successful regional strategies to broaden and support advocacy for necessary policy changes.
- There is a need for communication/marketing and partner/stakeholder input in TIF financing, bonds and donations, which all demonstrate the importance of collaboration with community members; and institutional, non-profit and even for-profit organisations. This collaboration is essential to increase funding and eventual implementation of bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

These types of funding mechanisms can be applied more broadly than in the US. Dutch cities that traditionally fund projects via specific municipal allocations are expanding into collaborative funding.

As studies like this continue to increase awareness of potential non-traditional local sources of bike and pedestrian infrastructure financing, it is likely we will see them proliferate, but the content will be critical. The creativity each city applies to financing infrastructure will be restricted by local legal structures and needs of stakeholders.