

# Support Senate Bill 508 – for Safer, “Complete” Streets

*League of Illinois Bicyclists, Chicagoland Bicycle Federation, Illinois PTA, Equip for Equality, Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities in Illinois, Illinois Public Health Association, Illinois Environmental Council, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Safe Roadways Initiative, AAA-Chicago Motor Club.*

**Summary:** SB508 directs IDOT to more proactively accommodate pedestrians (including wheelchairs) and bicyclists in its major road projects, where need and cost limits are met.

**Status:** Passed 9-0 in committee with IDOT “neutral”, after positive negotiations addressed IDOT concerns and constraints.

**Motivation:** 15% of Illinois traffic fatalities are pedestrians or cyclists. For decades, road designs often focused only on cars and trucks, while neglecting safety of others who must travel along or across roads. Increasingly, big roads are becoming barriers to walking, bicycling, and wheelchair use in communities.

Current IDOT design policies on sidewalks, road crossings, and bike accommodation lag behind other states and the intent of federal transportation law. In 2000, the Federal Highway Administration strongly encouraged states to adopt a policy commitment to design for the safety of other roadway users, where warranted and reasonable.

**Details:** SB508 says that the State is committed to meeting the needs of other road users. IDOT shall adopt the federal “Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel” policy, for major projects on state-maintained roads, where need exists (mostly in urban areas) and cost limits are met. Working with safety groups, a comparison to federal guidelines shall be done, with a transition plan for design policy changes and training.

**Previous Law:** In 2003, a “Context-Sensitive Solutions” bill passed, improving public participation in IDOT designs. SB508 is more focused on ped and bike policy deficiencies.

**Cost:** SB508 requests no new money, just better use of existing transportation dollars. At least 9 states have adopted similar policies to build safe and complete streets economically:

“The cost is incremental or minimal in terms of the overall construction costs for a new facility.” Whit Clement, Virginia Secretary of Transportation

“By fully considering the needs of all non-motorized travelers (pedestrians, bicyclists, and persons with disabilities) early in the life of a project, the costs associated with including facilities for these travelers are minimized.” Jeff Morales, Director, CalTrans

*Meeting the safety needs of other users is not a diversion – it’s a vital part of a project!*

**Please support SB508 for safer, complete streets!**

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## **Federal Highway Administration's "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel" policy statement**

The following is the policy statement section of "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach – A US DOT Policy Statement Integrating Bicycling and Walking into Transportation Infrastructure". The entire design guidance document is available at

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm>

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1. Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in new construction and reconstruction projects in all urbanized areas unless one or more of three conditions are met:

- bicyclists and pedestrians are prohibited by law from using the roadway. In this instance, a greater effort may be necessary to accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians elsewhere within the right of way or within the same transportation corridor.
- the cost of establishing bikeways or walkways would be excessively disproportionate to the need or probable use. Excessively disproportionate is defined as exceeding twenty percent of the cost of the larger transportation project.
- where sparsity of population or other factors indicate an absence of need. For example, the Portland Pedestrian Guide requires "all construction of new public streets" to include sidewalk improvements on both sides, unless the street is a cul-de-sac with four or fewer dwellings or the street has severe topographic or natural resource constraints.

2. In rural areas, paved shoulders should be included in all new construction and reconstruction projects on roadways used by more than 1,000 vehicles per day, as in States such as Wisconsin. Paved shoulders have safety and operational advantages for all road users in addition to providing a place for bicyclists and pedestrians to operate.

Rumble strips are not recommended where shoulders are used by bicyclists unless there is a minimum clear path of four feet in which a bicycle may safely operate.

3. Sidewalks, shared use paths, street crossings (including over- and undercrossings), pedestrian signals, signs, street furniture, transit stops and facilities, and all connecting pathways shall be designed, constructed, operated and maintained so that all pedestrians, including people with disabilities, can travel safely and independently.

4. The design and development of the transportation infrastructure shall improve conditions for bicycling and walking through the following additional steps:

- planning projects for the long-term. Transportation facilities are long-term investments that remain in place for many years. The design and construction of new facilities that meet the criteria in item 1) above should anticipate likely future demand for bicycling and walking facilities and not preclude the provision of future

improvements. For example, a bridge that is likely to remain in place for 50 years, might be built with sufficient width for safe bicycle and pedestrian use in anticipation that facilities will be available at either end of the bridge even if that is not currently the case

- addressing the need for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross corridors as well as travel along them. Even where bicyclists and pedestrians may not commonly use a particular travel corridor that is being improved or constructed, they will likely need to be able to cross that corridor safely and conveniently. Therefore, the design of intersections and interchanges shall accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians in a manner that is safe, accessible and convenient.
- getting exceptions approved at a senior level. Exceptions for the non-inclusion of bikeways and walkways shall be approved by a senior manager and be documented with supporting data that indicates the basis for the decision.
- designing facilities to the best currently available standards and guidelines. The design of facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians should follow design guidelines and standards that are commonly used, such as the AASHTO *Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities*, AASHTO's *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*, and the ITE Recommended Practice "*Design and Safety of Pedestrian Facilities*".

## **Estimate of Additional Costs of IDOT Complete Streets Policy**

The estimate below projects additional costs to IDOT due to proactively and routinely including bicycle and pedestrian features in roadway designs, to meet existing and projected needs. These features may include sidewalks and crosswalks, slip lanes and refuge islands, ped signal activation, bike lanes, paved shoulders, and others. Methodology and assumptions are described below.

**\$5893M** – FY05-11 Proposed Highway Improvement Program [source – IDOT]

**\$1239M** – State projects with scopes that could include bike/pedestrian improvements<sup>1</sup>

**\$495.6M** – Assume 40% of projects need more bike/ped accommodation<sup>2</sup>

**\$12.4M to \$24.8M** – Assume additional bike/ped features add 2.5%-5% of project cost<sup>3</sup>

**0.2% to 0.4%** – Percentage of highway budget for bike/ped beyond existing practices

**\$1.8M to \$3.5M** – Average annual cost to build state roads as more “complete streets”

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<sup>1</sup> Projects that are candidates for bike/ped improvements were individually selected from the IDOT FY05-11 program based on project scope – specifically, will there be reconstruction, widening, expansion or other relevant tasks under IDOT’s bike and pedestrian policy (BDE Chapter 17)? Bridge deck projects are excluded – existing policy already calls for bike accommodation. Simple resurfacing projects are not included, as any possible restriping for bikes would not add cost. Expressways are excluded, and non-expressway bridges over them are covered by existing policy and federal law. Selection of candidate projects was not always exact, but it is assumed that it evens out – some candidate projects are missed, while others should not have been included.

<sup>2</sup> A rough estimate of 40% of the candidate projects was chosen. Many projects already have ample, existing bike/ped accommodations. These are not included, as any bike/ped features would be replaced (if impacted) as part of the project. In others, existing IDOT implementation would already accommodate bike/ped sufficiently. Finally, many projects have a clear lack of need, as specified in IDOT policy (BDE section 17-1.04). It’s estimated that more than 40% of projects would need additional accommodation, but many projects require very little extra cost for bike/ped. This was factored into the 2.5% to 5% incremental project cost estimate, below.

<sup>3</sup> The estimated cost range of additional bike/ped accommodations (beyond existing policy and implementation) is conservatively high, based on discussions with experienced consultants and numbers provided by the Florida DOT for their implementation of bike lanes, sidewalks, and paved shoulders. 2.5 to 5% assumes similar implementation in Illinois, in addition to crossing features that may include pedestrian signal activation, refuge islands, and crosswalks. Assumed is the incremental cost (above current practice) of IDOT’s proactive inclusion of these bike/ped features, with local cost share rates equal to the rest of the project.

Comment - the incremental "Complete Streets" costs are likely to be lowest in lean budget years, when fewer dollars are spent on widening/expansion and other major projects.