

## *Why are we still building roads like this???*



For decades, road designs too often **neglected the safety** of others who must travel along or across roads. This continues in many IDOT road designs today!

**15% of Illinois traffic fatalities are pedestrians or bicyclists** – this includes many forced into dangerous situations with no other choice

IDOT roads are often the main roads in town. Too often, these big roads are barriers to walking, biking, and wheelchairs where there **is** existing and latent demand: in urban and suburban areas and on main roads in rural towns.

Meeting the safety needs of other road users is **not** a diversion – it's a basic and vital part of a project!

If the incremental money is not available to do a road project “right”, then it shouldn't be done at all!

## Examples of recently-finished IDOT road expansions



US 34 westbound at Farnsworth Ave., Aurora

**Left:** sidewalk (one-side only) from a very developed area ends, leaving a sidewalk gap on the main road from far east Aurora to Oswego. The area with the gap already has major parcels developed. Future filling of the gap was made much harder by the grading and a bridge just beyond this photo. (Alternate roads are not near and have no bike/ped accommodation.)

**Bottom Left:** In the sidewalk gap between Aurora and Oswego, there are several businesses. There is plenty of room but no sidewalks on either side – a much more costly retrofit would be required. The bicycle “accommodation” is one extra foot of width in the rightmost travel lanes, where speeds typically exceed 55 mph. A large but mostly unused median area is a tempting but dangerous space for cyclists needing to use this road.

**Bottom Right:** A fully developed suburban area with huge setbacks (no sidewalks) and large subdivisions on either side. Retail/commercial areas are within a mile of the subdivisions, but there is no way to get there besides this newly-expanded IL 59 road. Again, a 13’ travel lane amidst heavy, 55mph traffic is the only accommodation for non-motorized users.



US 34 eastbound near Oswego and Aurora borders



IL 59 southbound in southwestern Naperville/northern Plainfield



IL 59 northbound at Plainfield-Naperville Rd, near downtown Plainfield

**Top:** Just north of downtown Plainfield, the town's key roads to the north and northeast meet at a just-completed intersection. There are no crosswalks, pedestrian signals, or other features for crossing the roads. Just ahead, immediately under the railroad bridge and over a river, there are short, isolated stretches of sidewalk – but no sidewalks to get there and beyond.

**Bottom:** Fully-developed suburban area with lots of destinations along IL64. Highlighted in the middle is a pedestrian trying to cross 9-lane (with turn lanes) IL64 to her job at the Holiday Inn across the street. No crosswalks, pedestrian signals, or safely-designed medians are provided at this and several other intersections along recently-expanded IL64. Many people cross these intersections daily, and two have been killed since the project's completion.



IL 64 westbound at Gary Road, Carol Stream

## US14, Cary – Bad design, then deaths, then retrofit



**BEFORE:** Major road provides the only access from Cary, across the Fox River, to Fox River Grove. The road was built without sidewalks or bike accommodation. On Aug 7, 2000, Nate Oglesby (age 17) was killed by a left-turning motorist on his way home from his job, while bicycling in the dangerous median – the only available space. Two other teens were killed in the two years before that: one on a railroad bridge and the other crossing the river. All three youths were trying to travel through the corridor using what they thought were their best options given the lack of sidewalks and trails.



**AFTER:** A wide sidewalk was retrofitted, at a much higher cost than if it had been designed in from the start. Today, pedestrians and bicyclists; kids, adults, and seniors all use the corridor more safely.



## SB508 “Complete Streets” bill – Summary

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

- Declares 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 IDOT’s roads, where need exists (mostly in urban and suburban 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.

### Status (as of November 2005):

- Very positive negotiations with IDOT. Language edited to keep the main goal, reduce IDOT’s administrative burden and exempt most repaving projects.
- Supporting constituencies: *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.*
- Passed the Senate 41-13-1 with IDOT neutral
- Shelved in House Executive committee – as part of budget deal? The bill’s \$10-20M/year fiscal note is very misleading. Most of the amount stated comes from existing policy *outside this bill*. Likely result – no additional money to IDOT budget, just slight shifting of existing money starting in a couple of years.
- Governor’s office requested to support SB508 or an identical bill in 2006. As another option, IDOT and Governor’s office requested to adopt SB508’s provisions administratively – negating the need for legislation.

## Other Comments:

**Present approach is not proactive** – Even when the need exists, IDOT relies on local agencies (where they exist) to request and pay disproportionately for pedestrian improvements, instead of routinely including these in the designs. This doesn't seem right – locals have their own roads to worry about. And, this has led to gaps and omitted sidewalks in many, many cases.

**Federal law, FHWA recommendations** – Current design policies on sidewalks, road crossings, and bike accommodation do not meet the intent of federal transportation law or Federal Highway Administration recommendations. In 2000, the Federal Highway Administration strongly encouraged states to adopt a general policy commitment to design for the safety of other roadway users, where warranted and reasonable.

**Sidewalk cost-sharing policy** – IDOT requires locals to pay a higher cost-share percentage for new pedestrian improvements (sidewalks, ped signals, etc.) than they do for the rest of the road project – and this cost-share ranks near the bottom for 17 states surveyed. At a top-level meeting, we have asked that the same cost-sharing rates be applied to pedestrian elements of a project.

**Bike policy** – IDOT's 1995 bike policy specified appropriate bike accommodation (paved shoulders, bike lanes, wide curb lanes, or sidepaths) on generally all suburban and urban projects and rural towns' main streets. Implementation, however, has been inconsistent or inadequate – a problem that may worsen as districts increase autonomy.

The best approach would be a top-level IDOT commitment to technically review existing policy and its implementation – where there is or will be a need, do it; change the project scoping procedure to cost in bike/ped from the onset; and implement better training.

**Lack of flexibility** – The bike policy in IDOT's design manual is sometimes considered merely as "guidance". However, sidewalk/trail cost-sharing rates in the same manual are considered as definitive – such as the IL53 Lombard/Glen Ellyn project, when "bike" money that would have been spent on slight widening of the travel lane was not permitted to be applied to a side trail – as the community wanted.

**Previous Law:** In 2003, a "Context-Sensitive Solutions" bill passed, giving hope for improvements in bike-pedestrian policy and training issues. Bike-ped issues led the way during IDOT's CSS public input phase. However, CSS efforts (to date) have seemingly backed off to only new training on public input procedure – necessitating SB508.

**Other Complete Streets policies:** 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