



# League of Illinois Bicyclists



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November 5, 2007

Mr. Milton Sees, Secretary  
Illinois Department of Transportation  
2300 S. Dirksen Pkwy  
Springfield, IL 62764

Dear Secretary Sees,

Thanks in advance for the opportunity to meet with you on November 28 at 9:30am to discuss implementation of Senate Bill 314 (Public Act 95-0665). Attending will be representatives of Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP), the Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF), and LIB.

The goal of "Complete Streets" is safer access for all roadway users, including pedestrians and bicyclists who travel along or across roads. SB314 was motivated by deficient walking and bicycling accommodations on many state roads. These deficiencies have been identified as contributing to injuries and deaths to walkers and cyclists. In Illinois, Complete Streets have been supported by groups representing pedestrians, bicyclists, public health, the disabled, school PTAs, and the AAA-Chicago Motor Club. Nationally, others include AARP, the American Planning Association, the Institute for Transportation Engineers, and more.

In response, the Complete Streets legislation passed the Illinois General Assembly with only three (3) dissenting votes. Thus, we trust that IDOT will be mindful of the recent legislative mandate, and take this opportunity to improve the safety and convenience of our streets for all users. We're requesting your leadership in directing your staff to work with us to implement Complete Streets expeditiously.

To focus the conversation, we have enclosed current policy issues which need improvement as part of the new law's implementation.

We are thankful to IDOT for constructive collaboration on CSS training and initial work on BDE manual revision. We look forward to continued work together in meeting the legislative requirements of Complete Streets.

Sincerely,

Ed Barsotti  
Executive Director

# Notes for November 28, 2007 - IDOT Complete Streets Meeting

## Public Act 95-0665

(605 ILCS 5/4-220 new) Sec. 4-220. Bicycle and pedestrian ways.

(a) Bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be given full consideration in the planning and development of transportation facilities, including the incorporation of such ways into State plans and programs.

(b) In or within one mile of an urban area, bicycle and pedestrian ways shall be established in conjunction with the construction, reconstruction, or other change of any State transportation facility except:

(1) in pavement resurfacing projects that do not widen the existing traveled way or do not provide stabilized shoulders; or

(2) where approved by the Secretary of Transportation based upon documented safety issues, excessive cost or absence of need.

(c) Bicycle and pedestrian ways may be included in pavement resurfacing projects when local support is evident or bicycling and walking accommodations can be added within the overall scope of the original roadwork.

(d) The Department shall establish design and construction standards for bicycle and pedestrian ways. Beginning July 1, 2007, this Section shall apply to planning and training purposes only. Beginning July 1, 2008, this Section shall apply to construction projects.

## Implementation Issues

**Planning.** Part (a) --- CMAP is already studying IDOT's project scoping, planning, and development process and its effect on pedestrian facilities. With Complete Streets, bicycle and pedestrian accommodation can be part of the initial project scoping and budgeting.

**Urban Areas.** Part (b) --- Pedestrian and bicycle accommodation are already warranted in urban and suburban locations, according to BDE sections 17-1.04 and 17-4.03. A good definition of "urban area" already exists as MPO "Adjusted Urbanized Areas". These include places already developed and areas expected to be developed within five years.

### **Policy Issues - Pedestrian.** Part (b,d)

- The existing pedestrian warrants (17-4.03) are good in defining latent need. Adopting the FHWA's "Guidelines for New Sidewalk Installation" would provide better specificity as a function of land use.
- BDE Section 48-2.04 says that sidewalks "will only be constructed if the local agency is willing to participate financially" and requests them in the design. Public Act 95-0665 changes who initiates sidewalks to IDOT, with "pedestrian ways shall be established..." In other "best practices" states, the state initiates and builds sidewalks along its roads and local agencies must maintain them. And, instead of charging local agencies a different (higher) cost share for pedestrian features, sidewalk costs are just part of the overall project budget – and subject to the same cost sharing as the rest of the project.
- New (and some old) designs to better accommodate pedestrian safety must be included in IDOT's implementation of Complete Streets. Such designs address pedestrian safety by reducing pedestrians' exposure to fast-moving traffic. These include curb bulbouts, right-turn lane design changes, median refuge islands, right-turn "pork chop" islands, etc. Excessive

vehicle speeds in locations with pedestrian activity should be controlled by design elements. In general, IDOT needs to move to a policy of more compact intersection designs in urban and suburban areas, resulting in less pedestrian crossing risk and reduced pedestrian crossing time (and thus also reducing vehicle delay). Improving crossing safety is a vital part of Complete Streets.

- Accommodation of people with disabilities also needs to be addressed in IDOT's response to Complete Streets. Improvements to design and process are required to assure accessible design consistent with existing law. In particular, non-compliant cross-slopes and obstructions in pedestrian ways need to be addressed. Providing suitable accommodations for people with disabilities is an integral part of providing pedestrian facilities, and needs to be addressed.
- Signal operations for pedestrians need to be improved on IDOT roads. Again, more compact intersection designs would help make pedestrian travel work better.

**Policy Issues - Bicycle.** Part (b,d)

- The existing bicycle warrants (17-1.04) are also good in defining latent need.
- The bike accommodation policy for urban cross sections has been very inadequate:
  - 13' (or even 14') wide outside curb lanes where inappropriate and of minimal value as a "bike accommodation", particularly on busy high speed suburban arterials
  - IDOT staff unwillingness to construct bicycle lanes where appropriate
  - Policy reluctance and cost share obstacles for sidepaths, where appropriate
  - Some concern about bicycle clearance times on new very large intersections has been documented (bicycles can enter an intersection on green, but not make it across the intersection before opposing traffic is given green signal)
- Be clearer in BDE Chapter 17 in defining the appropriate bicycle accommodation for a specific situation. Implement "bicycle ways shall be established" by researching best practices elsewhere and developing a primary selection matrix with wide curb lanes, bike lanes, and sidepaths. (We are working with IDOT on this already.)
- Use a secondary matrix as an "excessive cost" backup with lower level of accommodation. The FHWA's "Accommodating Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel: A Recommended Approach" provides definition of "excessive cost" as 20% of the project cost, even though other states have usually found implementation to be much cheaper.
- Reduce the inherent sidepath conflicts by revising intersection design guidelines according to best practices.

**Exception Signoff.** Part (b) --- The reasons for *not* including bicycle and pedestrian ways in a project should be documented and approved at a high level within IDOT.

**Training.** Part (d) --- In late 2006 and early 2007, IDOT met with advocacy groups to collaborate on bike/ped components of CSS staff and consultant training, and to plan for a dedicated training session on bike/ped design issues. We are glad to continue work together on this aspect of the law.