

LIB's 2011 survey of County DOT/Highway Department bicycle and pedestrian design policies for Illinois counties with urbanized areas. 16 of 20 responded.
Compiled results are provided after the cover letter, below.



League of Illinois Bicyclists



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July 5, 2011

Dear County DOT or Highway Department official,

The League of Illinois Bicyclists, in collaboration with Bill Kuhn (Fulton County, IACE bicycle committee head), is conducting a survey about bicycle and pedestrian accommodation practices within County DOTs that serve urbanized and developing MPO areas.

People bicycle or walk for many reasons, such as recreation, health, and transportation. Some use these modes by choice, others by economic or other necessity. Major streets like county roads are often critical for these travelers. They serve community destinations, provide access across barriers, such as rivers, highways, and large land parcels, and are often the only continuous options – especially in newer, non-grid development.

I am hoping you will take a few minutes of your time to complete this survey. Please respond by July 19, replying by email (lib@bikelib.org) or sending to LIB, 2550 Cheshire Dr., Aurora, IL 60504. Or, feel free to call me at 630-978-0583 with your responses, if that is easier.

Thanks in advance for your help as we review this important area of safe road designs.

Sincerely,

Ed Barsotti, Executive Director, League of Illinois Bicyclists

Illinois County Highway Department Survey

Which County? _____ Name of survey respondent: _____

Cook – Daniel Szwaya, Scott VanDerAa

DeKalb - Nathan F. Schwartz, P.E.

DuPage – John Kos

Kane – Mike Sullivan

Kankakee - Jim Piekarczyk

Kendall –Fran Klaas

Lake – Bruce Christensen

Macon – Bruce Bird

McLean – Eric Schmitt

McHenry – Jason Osborn

Peoria – Amy Benecke McLaren

Rock Island – John Massa

Sangamon – Tim Zahn

Tazewell – John Anderson

Will – George Catalano

Winnebago – Joseph Vanderwerff Sr.

Process: Does your agency use any of the following when considering pedestrian and bicycle accommodation during road project scoping and preliminary design:

- 1) A formalized agency policy or standards on bicycle and pedestrian (bike/ped) accommodation used routinely during each project? Or, do you consider needed accommodation on a case-by-case basis?

Lake: *Lake County DOT has established a non-motorized travel investment policy that is used in the project scoping process for each roadway project.*

DuPage: *The DuPage County Board adopted a Healthy Roads Policy in 2003. In 2008, the policy was amended to allow for acquisition of right-of-way for sidewalks or bicycle paths, paving shoulders and implementation of low-cost improvements such as re-stripping existing roadways.*

Kankakee: *Yes, formal policy for urban sections.*

Winnebago: *Winnebago and Boone County have a Bicycle Plan. We generally try to accommodate bicycle paths on our highway and bridge system in accordance with that plan. Most of the recreational trails are not on the highway system although some are within the right-of-way.*

Kane: *KDOT has formalized policies in regards to bike/ped accommodations included in the Kane County Bike/Ped Plan. Needs are also considered on a case-by-case basis.*

Case-by-case: *Cook (when requested by local agency), DeKalb, Macon, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Sangamon*

Will: *The Highway Department does not have a policy. If a community or local agency requests paths, the county will incorporate with the requesting body paying for the added facility. That body is also responsible for all future maintenance.*

Kendall: *The County does not have a formalized policy, but we frequently are required to adhere to formalized policies, such as when our roadway improvement touches a State Highway; in which case we comply with the Complete Streets law and/or other applicable State or Federal Regulations.*

Tazewell: *State/Federal funds use Bureau Local Roads policies. No County policy.*

Rock Island: *No*

2) A set of warrants, or a documented checklist, to determine whether bike/ped accommodation is needed? (*IDOT's BDE Manual and Lake County DOT both have good examples of each*)

DuPage: *DuPage County uses our Healthy Roads policy as a guideline to determine the appropriate bicycle and / or pedestrian accommodation for a project. We also use the DuPage County Regional Bikeway Plan as a guide to determine if a bicycling accommodation should be included along a given section of a project. The DuPage County Regional Bikeway Plan provides information of any bikeway connections to local or regional trail bikeways in the plan that would factor into our decision to include bicycle accommodations as a part of a project.*

Kane: *While KDOT does not actively use a set of warrants or a documented checklist to determine bike/ped needs, however, projects involving State or Federal funds use the BDE manual. The Kane County Bicycle Plan recommends designing roadways for a BLOS of at least a C.*

Peoria: *BDE manual*

McHenry: *Only as required by for federal and state funding*

McLean: *No, it's based more on our knowledge of frequent use*

Sangamon: *We use the BDE manual as a basis for all of our federal aid projects.*

Tazewell: *Consider warrants or activity but utilize LR policies*

Winnebago: *see above (question 1)*

No: *Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, Kendall (on local agency projects), Macon, Rock Island, Will*

3) A staff member assigned to review the scope and the design details, from a bike/ped perspective? (*for example, IDOT Central office and each district, and DuPage DOT, have bike/ped coordinators*)

Kane: *KDOT has a bike/ped coordinator that provides information and reviews projects from a bike/ped perspective.*

Lake: *Lake County DOT has a bike facilities coordinator.*

DuPage: *The Trails Coordinator acts as a lead and coordinates with the DuPage Division of Transportation staff to review and implement appropriate bicycle and pedestrian accommodations.*

Kendall: *I have a grand total of 4 people in my office, including my secretary. So I guess the staff member assigned to review the scope and the design details of every project would be me.*

No: *Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, Macon, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell (insufficient staffing levels), Will, Winnebago*

Performance Measures: Are accommodation level of pedestrians and bicyclists included in the "performance measures" used to evaluate your agency's road designs? (*Bicycle Level of Service, in the Highway Capacity Manual, gauges on-road adult cyclist comfort level as a function of geometry and traffic conditions. Other planning measures exist, including Pedestrian LOS (off-road) and LIB's Complete Streets scoring methodology.*) Please describe the performance measures used by your agency.

Kane: *KDOT has often used BLOS ratings to evaluate and determine road designs.*

DuPage: *No specific performance measures are used, but bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are determined based on the Healthy Roads policy and on a case by case analysis considering the highway right-of-way and other factors.*

No or none: *Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, Lake, Macon, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell, Will, Winnebago. Kendall: What???*

Sidewalks: Please check all that apply for your road projects, adding further explanation if needed:

____ We use a County policy or other guidance to determine where sidewalks are needed and on how many sides. (*FHWA's New Sidewalk Installation does this based on land use and roadway classification.*)

DuPage, Kane, Kankakee, Lake

____ We routinely construct sidewalks on projects but do not have an official policy or guidance.

Peoria

____ We decide where sidewalks are needed on a case-by-case basis.

DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, Macon, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Sangamon, Tazewell

____ We leave it to local agencies to request sidewalks as part of the project.

Cook, DeKalb, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, Will, Winnebago

Do you require the locals to pay a sidewalk cost share? How much (%)? _____

No (0%): DuPage, Sangamon

20%: Lake

50%: Cook, Kankakee

100%: McHenry, Will, Winnebago

Case-by-case: Kendall

N/A: DeKalb, Tazewell (very little sidewalk in incorporated areas as our county roads don't pass thru municipalities)

Do you require the local agencies to maintain the sidewalks? YES or NO

NO: DuPage, McLean, Sangamon ("we are the local agency")

YES: Cook, DeKalb, Kane, Kankakee, Lake, Macon, McHenry, Will, Winnebago

Kendall: We attempt to always have municipal maintenance.

Peoria: Following most construction projects, the reconstructed road (and accompanying sidewalk) is jurisdictionally transferred to the appropriate community / local agency which it is in. For example, a road improvement project on a County Highway in West Peoria is jurisdictionally transferred to West Peoria following construction.

Bicycle Accommodation: Below are bikeway types specified in the *AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities* and/or *MUTCD*. For each, please check whether your agency has built this kind of facility, or has considered/would consider building the facility if it is a feasible bicycle accommodation in the appropriate situation:

	<i>Have built</i>	<i>Have considered/would consider</i>
Sidepath (<i>widened off-road trail along roadway</i>)	_____	_____
Have built: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Macon, McHenry, McLean, Peoria, Sangamon, Winnebago		
Have considered/would consider: Kendall, Tazewell		
No: Rock Island		

Bike Lanes (<i>dedicated, marked lanes on road</i>)	_____	_____
Have built: Cook, Lake, Peoria		
Have considered/would consider: Kane, Macon, McHenry, Winnebago		
No: Rock Island		

Bike Route signage	_____	_____
Have built: DuPage, Lake, McHenry, Peoria		
Have considered/would consider: Cook, DeKalb, Kane		
No: Rock Island		

Shared Lane Markings (<i>new in 2009 MUTCD</i>)	_____	_____
Have considered/would consider: McHenry, Peoria		
No: Rock Island		

Bicycle detector marking (<i>for on-road bikes to trigger demand-actuated stoplights</i>)	_____	_____
Have considered/would consider: DuPage, McHenry, Kane		
No: Rock Island		

Off-road multi-use trail (<i>separate right-of-way</i>)	_____	_____
Have built: Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Macon, McHenry, Sangamon, Winnebago		
Have considered/would consider: Kankakee, Kendall, Peoria		
Rock Island: Forest Preserve (<i>maintains, did not build</i>)		

Other bikeway type (<i>describe below</i>)	_____	_____
Cook: Bridge Widening to accommodate creek-side bicycle path. Bicycle path underpass to replace at-grade crossing.		
McHenry: Prairie Trail grade-separation over Rakow Road is being built and one exists over Algonquin		
Peoria: Wide outside curb lane		
Rock Island: No		
Sangamon: Paved shoulders		

Paved Shoulders: Paved shoulders on significant rural roadways enhance motorist safety and reduce road maintenance – while also improving bicyclist safety. Does your agency provide paved shoulders?

Yes: Cook

No: DeKalb (not typically), Kankakee

DuPage: The DuPage County highway system is primarily an urban system with curb and gutter. Most of our rural highways have paved shoulders suitable for use by bicyclists.

Kane: KDOT regularly paves shoulders on rural roadways to enhance bicyclist safety.

Kendall: Over the past 10 to 15 years or so, we have been constructing partially-paved shoulders (3' or 4' paved shoulder with 3' agg. shoulder outside paved) on many county highways. Although hard to document, I believe this has dramatically improved motorist safety by reducing off-road accidents. A by-product of this safety initiative is that it has provided "space" for bicyclist outside the traveled vehicle lane. On my advice, the Kendall County Board has been very reluctant to mark any of these paved shoulders as "bicycle lanes" because they would typically not meet AASHTO requirements for width and could expose the County to additional liability. Additionally, the County Board believes that it is inherently unsafe to encourage bicycle travel on rural highways, where traffic speeds average in excess of 60 mph. Our county is not nearly as urbanized as some of the collar counties, and so our opportunity to mix bicycle traffic with lower speed vehicular traffic is not nearly as high as some of the more urban counties.

Lake: Lake County's typical cross-sections for 2, 3 and 5-lane pavements each include (1) on rural sections a 4-foot paved shoulder and (2) on urban sections two feet of pavement outside the travel lane adjacent to B.6-24 curb and gutter.

Macon: Only where required by ADT.

McHenry: We would like to as a practice. Currently, there is strong opposition from the public regarding right-of-way needs for shoulders.

McLean: We do not provide paved shoulders, but would consider this in high use areas.

Peoria: We have provided paved shoulders on a case by case basis.

Rock Island: Rock Island County has very few roads with 100% paved shoulders. We do pave the shoulders in front of houses for all county roads.

Sangamon: We try to use paved shoulders in the urbanized area.

Tazewell: YES on several routes

Will: The Highway Department's policy for rural roads is to provide a 1.5 feet wide pave shoulder with a 6.5 feet wide aggregate shoulder.

Winnebago: We do not pave our shoulders nor do we have a policy to do so

Also, where shoulders are converted to right-turn lanes, or are not possible because of right-turn lanes, do you maintain some usable width or other accommodation for cyclists?

No: Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, McHenry

Peoria: Shoulders are maintained along right turn lanes.

Sangamon: We have not converted to a right turn lane that I know of.

Tazewell: Possibly if available right of way allows

Rumble Strips: If your agency uses rumble strips, do you also follow FHWA's and/or IDOT BDE's guidance for reducing negative impact on bicyclists' safety? This includes providing periodic longitudinal gaps and at least 3 or 4 feet of rumble-free "clear-zone" to the right of the rumbles.

Does not install rumble strips: Cook, DuPage, Kankakee, Lake, Tazewell, Will

No: DeKalb, Macon, Rock Island (very few rumble strips)

Kane: KDOT does not routinely use rumble strips but does so on occasion. FHWA and IDOT BDE guidance are used when rumble strips are used.

Kendall: We have gotten away from rumble strips. The few remaining ones we have are "recessed" strips that would not affect bicyclists. Additionally, we would not place the rumble strips to the right of the white line, so bicyclists could completely avoid the strips.

McHenry: Yes we use rumble strips. No we do not reduce negative impacts.

McLean: We only use transverse rumble strips on the approach to stop sign controlled intersections. We do not use edge of the road rumble strips.

Peoria: Rumble strips are placed from the centerline to the edge line. [Ed: presumably referring to transverse rumbles approaching stop signs]

Sangamon: We have rumble strips on some of our wide shoulders and there is at least 3-4 feet of clear zone.

Winnebago: We do have rumble strips, but we do not follow any guidance for bicycle safety

Right Corner Islands: Especially at large multilane, suburban-style intersections, right corner islands (aka "pork chops") increase safety for pedestrians and off-road bicyclists by isolating turning motions, locating stoplines and crosswalks at more realistic locations closer to the crossroad, and improving interactions with motorists. Reduced ped signal timing is another design benefit, in light of MUTCD changes. Does your agency use right corner islands at such intersections, including perpendicular intersections? (*Kane DOT's Orchard/Galena in Aurora is a good design example, and Winnebago DOT's Perryville Road uses stop signs as a good method of sidepath traffic control to get to the pork chops.*)

Cook: Yes, some locations.

DeKalb: Typically yes.

DuPage: As a matter of practice, DuPage County has not constructed right corner islands strictly as a bicycle / pedestrian accommodation. However, the County has constructed some right corner turn islands that offer pedestrian/bicycle refuge and also provide traffic channeling benefits and signal placement.

Kane: KDOT does regularly use right corner islands at intersections.

Kankakee: Can't say that we have anything so large.

Kendall: We have very few large multilane, suburban-style intersections and do not have any raised corner islands.

Lake: Lake County's design policy is to avoid the use of right corner islands. However, that being said we have employed their use in certain situations.

Macon: Does not apply to roads under our jurisdiction.

McHenry: No

McLean: We have one location with a sidepath that has a right corner island.

Peoria: Right corner islands are used only at very large multi-lane intersections.

Rock Island, Tazewell: N/A

Sangamon: We have utilized these.

Will: This would be investigated for inclusion during the contract plan preparation if sidewalks / multiuse paths are being included as part of the improvements.

Winnebago: Yes we provide the islands as you noted above

Crosswalks: In urban and suburban settings, does your agency regularly install crosswalks across all signalized intersection approaches, assuming sidewalks exist or may be installed later?

Yes: DeKalb, Kankakee, Macon, Peoria

Cook: Crosswalks marked only when there are existing sidewalks or sidewalks to be installed as part of a current project.

DuPage: DuPage County installs crosswalks at all intersections. It is DuPage County policy to install and maintain crosswalks and stop bars across our County Highways and require that local governments maintain crosswalks and stop bars across local roads.

Kane: KDOT does not install crosswalks at all signalized intersection approaches but has been increasing the number of crosswalks and pedestrian signals on intersection projects.

Kendall: Most

Lake: Lake County installs crosswalks only at approaches where sidewalks exist.

McHenry: No

McLean: We do not have a lot of signalized intersections with sidewalks on both sides of the intersection.

Sangamon: We install where sidewalks exist.

Peoria: No

Tazewell: N/A

Winnebago: Yes we install crosswalks at most locations where there are sidewalks, but not at every location where sidewalks may be installed later.

IDOT BLR Manual: Are there any design policy changes you would recommend to the IDOT BLR Manual, in regards to pedestrian and bicycle issues?

No: Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, Peoria, Rock Island, Sangamon, Tazewell, Will, Winnebago

DuPage: DuPage County would recommend consideration be given to reducing the mandatory 10' sidepath width to 8' wide where high bicycle volumes are not anticipated in urban areas. This reduced width would be particularly helpful where limited right-of-way is available for sidepath construction.

Kendall: *Yes. I think when IDOT reconstructs a State Highway in an urbanized area, they should provide sidewalk and/or multi-use paths at no cost to the local agency, provided the local agency agrees to maintain in perpetuity.*

McHenry: *Better definitions of urbanizing area are needed.*

McLean: *I have a design recommendation. If a sidepath is being built and it is adjacent to the aggregate shoulder, the aggregate shoulder should be surfaced treated (oil and chip or hot mix asphalt) to slow the amount of debris that gets deposited on the surface of the trail.*

IDOT BDE Complete Streets Implementation: Do you have any feedback on the June 2010 design policy changes made to the IDOT BDE Manual, in regards to pedestrian and bicycle issues?

No: *Cook, DeKalb, Kankakee, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Tazewell, Will*

DuPage: *IDOT should pay for all costs, maintenance and liability for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations on State Highways as a result of the State's Complete Street policy. The new policy in another unfunded mandate and requires local agencies to either pay a 20 percent cost share of construction as well as assume liability and maintenance or provide a resolution to IDOT indicating the local agency is against the construction of the path.*

Kane: *We feel the policy is appropriate but enforcement of the policy is not always*

Kendall: *Yes. I believe Complete Streets is too inflexible, frequently requiring pedestrian and/or bicycle accommodation where there is no documented need.*

Lake: *The law is so rigid that common sense decisions, as to real need, are impossible.*

Sangamon: *Local agencies need to be aware of bicycle/pedestrian accommodations but a policy such as was issued at the state level without a dedicated funding source should not be applied.*

Winnebago: *We have limited dollars available to maintain our road system. By requiring pedestrian accommodations that we as locals could be asked to pay for on the State Road system would impair our ability to maintain our highway system. We as locals realize the need for pedestrian/bicycle facilities. We believe we are in a much better position to determine where such facilities should be built than would the State of Illinois particularly than if they are blindly required on State projects.*

Training: Bicycle and pedestrian planning and design topics often are not covered adequately in college curricula, and the field has evolved in the past two decades. Does your agency encourage design staff and consultants to seek training in these topics? What training is provided?

No: *Kankakee, Kendall*

Cook: *Staff has received training from outside agencies including ATA, CMAP and IDOT.*

DeKalb: *We do not attend seminars specifically on bicycle planning. However, I do sometimes go to classes on the topic during conferences.*

DuPage: *Yes, staff is encouraged and has attended appropriate training classes concerning bicycle and pedestrian planning and design. For example, DuPage County DOT staff has attended trainings at IDOT and CMAP.*

Kane: *KDOT encourages design staff to seek training in bike/ped topics. Training is typically provided by professional associations, CMAP, and other groups.*

Lake: LCDOT staff are encouraged to attend training on bike/ped issues through a variety of outlets: Northwestern University Traffic Institute, IDOT, CMAP and webinars.

McHenry: Yes. IDOT Technical Programs, ITE, APWA, APA forums

McLean: We would be interested in training if there is some available.

Peoria: Staff is encouraged to attend continuing education opportunities throughout various outlets. However, more localized training is needed, due to travel costs associated with training. The annual APWA conference in Peoria might be a good venue for future trainings.

Rock Island: If training is available through IDOT

Sangamon: We have not attended specific training but do educate ourselves via professional group meetings/conferences and other meeting opportunities.

Tazewell: Any training is always encouraged if budget allows

Winnebago: Yes we take advantage as courses are offered.

Room for further explanations to questions above, or for comments on related matters:

DeKalb: If multi-use paths are incorporated in our plans, we use a 12' wide aggregate base 8-10" deep with 10' wide HMA surface 3" deep and 2' shoulders typically.

Kankakee: Our costs have more than doubled over the last decade while our revenues may have risen by 10% or less. We have virtually no capital improvement program and are no longer able to provide a viable hot mix asphalt resurfacing program. About all we do is pavement preservation...this means that many of our hot mix asphalt surfaces will see application of bituminous surface treatment (chip seals). We're also experiencing greater wheel path distortion and edge cracking due in no small measure to wider heavier trucks. Improved or static levels of service are unsustainable under the current revenue mechanisms. We're going backwards in providing the most basic level of service to motor vehicles not to mention cyclists and pedestrians.

Kendall: At my suggestion, Kendall County is currently investigating a concept wherein the County would set up a fund and place \$50,000 per year from the County's Transportation Sales Tax Fund in the account. Municipalities, Forest Preserves and Park Districts in Kendall County could then petition the County to access the funds to construct sidewalks, bike paths or multi-use paths in their respective jurisdictions. Funding would be handled like a grant with the County paying for up to 50% of the cost of the project. The County Board would review applications and decide which applicants are successful.

The concept is in its infancy, with the SAO reviewing legal issues. But initial reaction from County Board members has been positive.

Macon: We have very little mileage in the urban area. Where our roads coincide with the MPO map showing proposed bike routes we incorporate bike and path facilities into the design.

McHenry: *McHenry County has adopted a County Board Strategic Goal of “Advocating for alternative modes of transportation” including bicycle and pedestrian modes. The County is embarking on an update of its long-range transportation plan and has hired the Active Transportation Alliance to assist in the public outreach efforts including bicycle workshops. The County will be reaching out to the McHenry County Bicycle Federation and other stakeholders to discuss and shape the County’s future role in these aspects of transportation.*

One of the problems confronting the County is the lack of bicycle and pedestrian counts to drive the engineering process. Often, when counts are taken, they are taken at intersections or along highways that have little to no accommodation for bicyclist and pedestrians. The fact that these counts are extremely low is not likely an indication of low demand.

Rock Island: *Rock Island County has very few “urbanized” county roads and we have not had a large demand for bicycle routes or sidewalks along our roads. We do not have formalized agency policies on these issues, but we do correspond with our MPO (Bi-State) routinely. The County Forest Preserve along with various Municipalities maintain a designated bike path along the Mississippi River.*

Tazewell: *Although Tazewell County is somewhat suburban, very few of our county highways have the issues you describe in the survey. Our roads are primarily rural and very few are located within urban boundaries. Several of our higher volume roads have 6’-10’ paved shoulders and many bicyclists use these to cycle on. Most engineers realize the need to provide expanded width for accommodation but it simply becomes an economy issue, especially when property acquisition is needed. We are currently overseeing a road widening project that involves two cities and a township but how does a township pay for a separate path/right of way acquisition? Tough choices when road revenues don’t keep up with cost escalation.*

Our paved shoulders create a much safer road which is easier to maintain and gives the excellent side benefit of giving bicyclists a place to ride. However, we can’t afford paved shoulders on all roads. We just finished a construction project that placed 10’ paved shoulders on Springfield Road south of East Peoria and greatly improved the road but it took us 3+ years and several costly plan adjustments to get thru property acquisition