



November 11, 2016

Mr. Kensil Garnett, District Engineer
IDOT District 5
13473 IL Hwy 133
Paris, IL 61944

Veterans Parkway resurfacing through Bloomington-Normal

Dear Mr. Garnett,

Please consider the following input for your 2017-2022 MYP Resurfacing (3P) projects for Business I-55 / Veterans Parkway from I- 55 to Commerce Drive in Bloomington and Normal.

At present, Veterans Parkway is a major barrier for bicycle travel along or across it. Any road project, even resurfacing work, can be a (rare) opportunity for much-needed improvements.

In 2014 and 2015, we responded to IDOT's Bob Nelson's Bicycle Travel Assessments with detailed requests that are in the projects' files. Further, we echo the City of Bloomington's Bicycle Master Plan recommendations, relevant for both the Bloomington and Normal sections:

- A sidepath on one side, with a sidewalk on the other, for the entire road length
- Improved on-road crossings of Veterans Parkway, along with occasional grade-separated crossings – relevant text from the plan is repeated here:

A recurring theme and need expressed during the plan's public input was safer bicycle crossings of Veterans Parkway. At present, there is one designated grade-separated crossing, a Constitution Trail underpass by General Electric Road. [...] Most (but not all) of the at-grade crossings have sidewalk pedestrian crossings with right-corner and median islands at most (but not all) intersection faces.

Some relatively quieter roads that are good candidates for on-road bikeways away from Veterans have multiple turn lanes and narrower lane widths at Veterans – causing a lower level of accommodation at the intersection. Examples are Clearwater, Jackson, Lincoln, and Mercer.

A two-pronged approach to crossing Veterans Parkway is recommended:

- 1. Seek to provide grade-separated crossings every two miles or so. Investigate engineering feasibility for an underpass or overpass somewhere between Eastland Drive and Lincoln Street...*
- 2. Any Veterans Parkway project that includes resurfacing of cross streets in their intersection functional areas should study striping reconfiguration and lane narrowing for bike lanes (regular or green bike lanes), combined bike lane/turn lanes (Shared Lane Markings in right turn lanes), or other FHWA-accepted treatments. If such improvements are not possible during resurfacing, reconstruction of Veterans should add cross street pavement width to allow for bike lanes.*

Working Statewide for Better Bicycling

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Bob Nelson has pointed out that many of our suggestions fall outside the scope of a 3P project. It is requested that IDOT, the City of Bloomington, and the Town of Normal collaborate on:

- Improving on-street bicycle crossings (#2 above) within the 3P projects' scopes;
- Expanding the projects' scopes or doing a concurrent project(s) to more cost-effectively add other recommended features.

We would be glad to discuss these and other project design issues. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Barsotti". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ed Barsotti, Chief Programs Officer, Ride Illinois

Cc: Jon McCormick and Bob Nelson, IDOT
Jim Karch, City of Bloomington
Mercy Davison, Town of Normal