



September 7, 2017

Mr. Kensil Garnett
IDOT District 4
401 Main St.
Peoria, IL 61602-1111

RE: I-180 bridge over Illinois River in Hennepin

Dear Mr. Garnett,

Please consider the following input for your 2018-2023 MYP bridge project (new deck, rehabilitation) for the I-180/IL26 bridge over the Illinois River in Hennepin.

We believe that the Illinois River is the most significant natural barrier to bicycling within the state's borders. Many older bridges, including those in Henry, Lacon, and Spring Valley, are very or extremely hazardous for bikes, without safe alternatives for tens of miles. Even where surrounding areas have relatively low bike usage, Illinois River bridge projects' potential to improve bicycle safety should be maximized – as has been occurring with recent bridge replacements over the river further east.

At present, I-180 is certainly overbuilt as an interstate, for only 2500 ADT. Despite bikes being prohibited, Strava's heat map (labs.strava.com/heatmap) of bicycle trips by users of that app confirms at least some cyclist usage, not a surprise given the low traffic, four lanes, and lack of alternatives.

While there do not seem to be any easy solutions, we request you to investigate feasible, creative options, whether a deck expansion, a reduction to two lanes with painted median and wide shoulders, bicyclist-actuated warning beacons (as Champaign and D5 are investigating for the Kirby Avenue bridge over I-57), or something else. Interstate bicycle access would only be needed across the bridge, between the IL26 exits on both sides. Note that the I-72 bridge over the Mississippi River does provide an Illinois precedent for bicycle use on an interstate.

We would be glad to discuss this project further. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Barsotti".

Ed Barsotti, Chief Programs Officer, Ride Illinois

Cc: Jon McCormick and Chris Maushard, IDOT

Working Statewide for Better Bicycling

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