



## Upshift

summer 2017



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## Upshift Summer 2017

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### Cover photo

Former Lieutenant Governor of Illinois  
Sheila Simon and Ride Illinois Board  
Member Perry Knop enjoying the 2017  
Grand Illinois Bike Tour this past June.

# ride

ILLINOIS

## Bike Safety Education for Families

On June 10th, approximately 3,000 people attended Swedish Covenant Hospital's Summer Social event in Chicago.



The community event focused on bicycle safety and education, with 1,000 bike helmets and water bottles distributed to children and parents in hopes of encouraging a safe and active summer. Ride Illinois was there to help educate families on safe cycling practices and sharing the road.

Kids stopped by the Ride Illinois table and played our "Bike Safety Quiz: Live Edition" game by answering various bike safety questions in order to win a prize. We also talked with parents and answered questions about family

bicycling and staying safe on the road as both a motorist and a cyclist. We had a great time connecting with the local community and encouraging kids and parents to use BikeSafetyQuiz.com to learn more. We look forward to joining again next year!



## Sign Up For Our Monthly E-News

Stay up to date on Ride Illinois' efforts, action alerts, and bicycling-related news and events around the state by signing up for our monthly e-newsletter at [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org). Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for even more frequent announcements.

# Bicycle Traffic Bill HB1784 Signed into Law

This past spring, Ride Illinois proposed and successfully advocated for new legislation that will strengthen Illinois bicycle traffic laws. We're pleased to announce that House Bill 1784 unanimously passed both houses and was signed into law by Governor Rauner on August 25th. The new laws will go into effect on January 1, 2018.



Photo Credit: Daniel Schwen, via Wikimedia Commons

## The amendments will:

- **Allow motorists to pass bicyclists in a no-passing zone under certain conditions to improve cyclist safety**
- **Clarify bicycling on road shoulders**
- **Allow a rear red light instead of or in addition to a rear red reflector**

Details about each amendment and exact language are outlined on the following pages.

Thank you to our members and supporters that spoke up and asked their state legislators to pass the bicycle traffic safety bill. As HB1784 made its way through the General Assembly, Ride Illinois put out a number of action alerts and you responded! Over the course of two months, approximately 1,400 letters were emailed to our state representatives and senators by our members and fellow Illinois cyclists. Your voice was integral to the successful passing of this new legislation!

We also want to thank all of our bill sponsors for their support, and especially thank Representative Butler and Senator Steans for leading the bill through the House and Senate.

## House Sponsors

Representatives: Tim Butler (87th District), Anna Moeller (43rd District), Thomas Morrison (54th District), Frances Ann Hurley (35th District), Dave Severin (117th District)

## Senate Sponsors

Senators: Heather A. Steans (7th District), Ira I. Silverstein (8th District), Dale Fowler (59th District), Jim Oberweis (25th District), Cristina Castro (22nd District)



## ALLOW MOTORISTS TO PASS BICYCLISTS IN A NO-PASSING ZONE



Photo Credit: American Bicycling Education Association

Roadway no-passing zones are determined by road engineers, with zone lengths based on the relative speeds of drivers of motorized vehicles passing other vehicles. For some roads, no-passing zones continue for a very long time.

This presents a problem for drivers wishing to pass a relatively slow-moving bicyclist on two-lane roads lacking enough width for drivers to safely and legally pass with at least three feet lateral clearance. While there may be sufficient time to safely pass a bicycle, the solid centerline tells the motorist not to move into the oncoming lane – even partially – to do so.

In this common situation, most motorists do cross solid centerlines to pass cyclists anyway. Some drivers choose to pass too closely, to obey the no-passing zone. However, in doing so, they illegally squeeze by within the same, too-narrow lane – a scary maneuver sometimes leading to sideswipe crashes. For long no-passing zones, those obeying both the no-passing zone and the three-feet passing law may end up following the bicyclist slowly for a long time.

It was not clear whether the current law allows a no-passing zone exception in this case by considering a bicycle as an “obstruction” using 5/11-701(a)2. This ambiguity will now be addressed through the amendment below, legalizing what most motorists already do.

### **New Amendment to 625 ILCS 5/11-703 (d-5):**

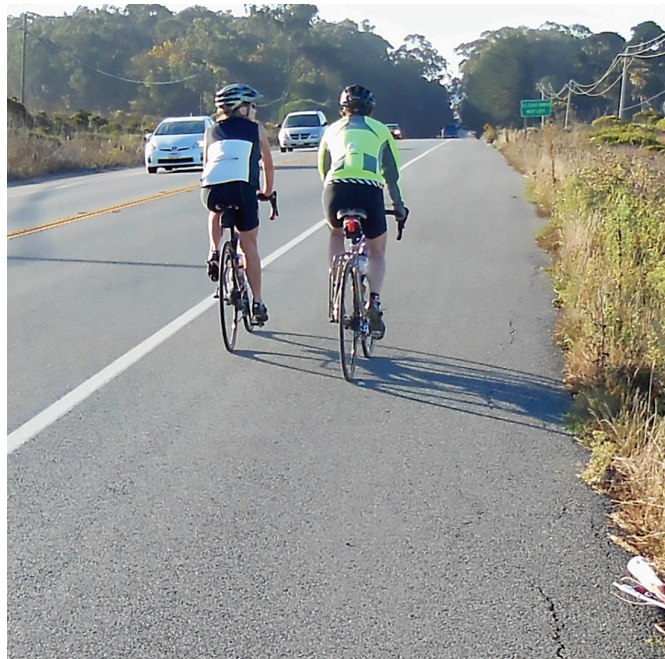
A driver of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on a highway may, subject to the provisions in paragraph (d) of this Section and Section 11-706 of this Code, pass to the left of the bicycle on a portion of the highway designated as a no-passing zone under Section 11-707 of this Code if the driver is able to overtake and pass the bicycle when:

- (1) the bicycle is traveling at a speed of less than half of the posted speed limit of the highway;
- (2) the driver is able to overtake and pass the bicycle without exceeding the posted speed limit of the highway; and
- (3) there is sufficient distance to the left of the centerline of the highway for the motor vehicle to meet the overtaking and

### **New Amendment to 625 ILCS 5/11-707:**

No-passing zones. (c): This Section does not apply under the conditions described in Section 11-701 (a) 2, subsection (d-5) of Section 11-703, ...

## CLARIFY BICYCLING ON SHOULDERS



Current law 625 ILCS 5/11-709.1 largely restricts vehicles driving on a shoulder, with some exceptions including “any farm tractor or implement of husbandry” listed in its paragraph



(b). Bicycling on a paved shoulder is generally accepted practice, usually preferred by cyclists, but it is not legally clarified. Legal clarity would be a benefit both for cyclists as well as for road agencies desiring to sign or otherwise designate bicycle routes having such shoulders.

However, it is poor practice to require cyclists to ride on a shoulder. If the shoulder is unpaved (e.g., gravel), many bikes are unable to ride on it without a high risk of a flat tire and possibly falling. Many paved shoulders are not routinely swept, resulting in debris accumulation that frequently causes flats and possibly leads to falls. Shoulder rumble strips, while reducing car run-off-the-road crashes, are jarring and dangerous to ride on for bikes. Finally, other legal cyclist traffic maneuvers require riding away from the shoulder.

The newly passed amendment will add bicycles as exceptions to the statute restricting driving on a shoulder. A statement that shoulder riding is not a requirement will be added to IDOT's bicycle webpage and other state publications – which are used in the education, enforcement, and judicial systems. It was similarly made clear in legislative intent language that shoulder riding is not a requirement.

#### **New Amendment to 625 ILCS 5/11-709.1:**

Driving on the shoulder.

(a) Vehicles shall be driven on a roadway, and shall only be driven on the shoulder for the purpose of stopping or accelerating from a stop while merging into traffic. It shall be a violation of this Section if while merging into traffic and while on the shoulder, the vehicle passes any other vehicle on the roadway adjacent to it.

(b) This Section shall not apply to any authorized emergency vehicle, to any authorized transit bus, to any bicycle, to any farm tractor or implement of husbandry, to any service vehicle while engaged in maintenance of the highway or related work, or to any authorized vehicle within a designated construction zone.

## **REAR RED LIGHT INSTEAD OF OR IN ADDITION TO A REAR RED REFLECTOR**

Current law 625 ILCS 5/11-1507 governs required equipment when bicycling at night. Required on the back is “a red reflector on the rear of a type approved by the Department which shall be visible from all distances from 100 feet to 600 feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle.”



Red lights may be used in addition to a reflector, and there is no specificity on whether the light must be steady or could be flashing: “A lamp emitting a red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear may be used in addition to the red reflector.”

However, today's improved rear-lighting technology has eliminated the need for reflectors, and many bicyclists solely use rear lights already.

Our assessment is that the law should be updated so that a steady or flashing lamp may be used instead of the red reflector. Eight states and the City of Chicago currently allow either a light or reflector in their vehicle code, and now Illinois will join the group.

#### **New Amendment to 625 ILCS 5/11-1507:**

(a) Every bicycle when in use at nighttime shall be equipped with a lamp on the front which shall emit a white light visible from a distance of at least 500 feet to the front and with a red reflector on the rear of a type approved by the Department which shall be visible from all distances from 100 feet to 600 feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful lower beams of headlamps on a motor vehicle, except that a lamp emitting a steady or flashing red light visible from a distance of 500 feet to the rear may be used in addition to or instead of the red reflector.



## Successful Advocacy in Bloomington

Ride Illinois produced a Bicycle Master Plan for the City of Bloomington in 2015. Michael Gorman, board member of the local advocacy organization Bike BloNo, tells the story of how local advocates added a major street to that plan.

Bloomington, Illinois, hadn't done much of anything to accommodate bikes on city streets. It was the summer of 2013 and a new mayor, Tari Renner, had just been elected on a vision of, among other things, safer streets. After installing a couple blocks of bike lanes and connecting Illinois Wesleyan University with Downtown Bloomington via sharrows, it was time to take the next big step: creating a citywide Bicycle Master Plan.

Bloomington's smaller twin city, Normal, had hired Alta Planning + Design to create this kind of plan back in 2008-09, so there was some local precedent. Normal's plan included accommodations on some of the busiest streets in town and involved innovative designs such as bicycle boulevards, protected bike lanes, and even a cycletrack on a state road. This was a very progressive document for Central Illinois, especially back when it was adopted in 2009.

Bloomington wasn't ready to take such a big leap. They also didn't



want a plan that looked great on paper but would just sit on a shelf and never be implemented. With the advice of local bike advocates, the city entered into a contract with Ride Illinois to create a plan. After receiving survey responses from more than 1,000 local residents and specific route requests from roughly 100 people, one thing was clear: cyclists wanted safer accommodations on big streets.

The number-two requested street was Washington Street. Washington Street runs east-west almost the whole way through Bloomington, dead-ending at the airport. It connects the historically low-income west side with downtown, the main branch of the Constitution Trail, State Farm Insurance corporate headquarters, and one of two local hospitals. If you're trying to navigate Bloomington, it's hard to avoid Washington Street.

For the last twenty years or so, Bloomington's Public Works Department has been working to add vehicle capacity on Washington

Street. Ultimately, their goal has been to make it a four-lane artery through the entire city. Former comprehensive plans called for growth on the community's far west side, and Washington would have been a critical connection between this area of greenfield development and the existing destinations along the corridor. This west-side growth has never substantially materialized, but it was still planned on paper - and the engineers believed a four-lane arterial would be necessary to accommodate this growth. (The current comprehensive plan, which expressly calls for infill development, was adopted later.)

When Ride Illinois read the public input requesting bike lanes on Washington Street, they determined this could be feasible on much of the east side. However, since the City had other long-term ideas for Washington, the final bike plan instead used less-direct neighborhood streets to head east-west through this area of town. For reference, bike lanes





were noted as an “other option”, should those ideas change.

Fast-forward to October 2015. The plan, sans Washington Street, has been adopted by City Council. The local advocacy group I co-founded, Bike BloNo, holds a membership meeting to figure out which projects in the plan we should push to get done first. We break up into four groups, three of which - even though it's not in the document we gave them - individually asked us to work on Washington Street. We knew it'd be an uphill battle, but we accepted the challenge.

The first step was figuring out what to ask for. I measured the street, block by block, using a cheap laser distance measurer. Then I went online and used the free tool StreetMix.net to create pretty cross-sections we could show the public. Stepping out of the gate with professional-looking renderings helps to sell any project.

We then met with neighborhood stakeholders along the corridor. It turned out that one neighborhood association, in a wealthy area of town, had originally formed a couple of decades ago specifically to oppose the City's plan to widen the street through their neighborhood. We still had to convince them of the safety benefits of bike lanes, but we were able to show them that we could do everything we were talking about without changing the pavement width at all, even if we kept parking on one side of the street. That was huge.

In September 2016, two Public Works staff members attended a NACTO Training Seminar as part of Ride Illinois' Illinois Bike Summit. From the seminar, they learned how bike lanes can be accommodated on busy streets, often without any adverse impacts on traffic flow,

usually with even better safety for motorists than by building streets the usual way. They were ready to re-envision Washington Street.

I started having monthly meetings with Public Works to talk details. We worked through issues like loading zones for individual businesses, parking for tour buses at a concert venue, specific locations for turn lanes, and the like. In the end,



after about six months of back-and-forth discussions, we were ready to present the idea to the public as a proposed amendment to the Bicycle Master Plan.

Before holding public meetings, Bike BloNo wanted to show the community - in a real, tangible way - what we were proposing. We'd seen other communities implement pop-up bike lanes and we wanted to give it a shot. Public Works loved the idea (even though it was completely unprecedented in the community), so we worked with them on logistical issues; they provided an arrow board truck with a driver, hundreds of orange

traffic cones, and a sharrow stencil. They even put up changeable message boards to inform the public about what was going on.

At 11pm on a Sunday night, thirteen Bike BloNo volunteers (including three neighborhood residents) got to work. We had purchased thirty cans of white spray-chalk and an applicator to keep the lines straight, and we brought safety vests, lights, brooms, two-way radios, and a chalk line. By 3am, we'd installed a half-mile long bike lane. Finally, we'd taken renderings on paper and turned them into reality - if only for a couple of weeks. It only cost us about \$500, but the feedback we received was invaluable.

And, boy, did we receive feedback. 240 people provided official written comments - more than Public Works believes they've received about a lane reconfiguration ever before. There were newspaper stories, radio and TV coverage, letters to the editor, vigorous debate on social media... One homeowner even created a giant yard sign to oppose the project. In the end, roughly two-thirds of the official feedback was in favor of the project - and a City Council that is often said to disagree on whether or not the sky is blue voted unanimously in favor of the proposal. We'll see the first stretch painted later this summer.

There are Washington Streets all around the state and across the country - both literally and figuratively. Once we started taking measurements and fleshing out the proposal, it really wasn't very difficult to convince people that this was possible. I'd encourage concerned citizens in every community to look at their biggest, most dangerous streets and come up with proposals to make them safer for everyone. All it takes is one person to start the conversation!

*Photo credit: Michael Gorman*



# Promoting Bicycle Safety on College Campuses



University of Illinois at Chicago, Northwestern University, North Central College, Dominican University, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and Southern Illinois University all participated and asked their campus communities to use our online resource [www.bikesafetyquiz.com](http://www.bikesafetyquiz.com) to learn how to ride safely. Individuals completing the quiz could submit their certificate of completion into a campus raffle for prizes and a chance to win a \$100 cash prize from Ride Illinois. Hundreds of Bike2Campus participants completed the quiz, and winners were selected from each campus. The University of Illinois at Chicago topped the list with over 200 quiz contest entries!

If you'd like to learn more about using [www.bikesafetyquiz.com](http://www.bikesafetyquiz.com) as an educational resource for your bicycling events, email us at [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org).

This past spring, colleges around the state coordinated "Bike 2 Campus" events encouraging students, faculty, and staff to commute by bike. Ride Illinois partnered with several of the campuses to help promote their events and boost bicycle safety education at the same time.



6



"The online IL Bike Safety quiz served as the official (non)crash course for students during Bike2Campus Week. It challenged students to successfully complete three-levels (Bronze, Silver and Gold) of multiple choice questions or ultimately earning the confidence and know how of riding safely in and around the city. Students unanimously shared that the bike safety quiz offered them a better understanding for effective cycling and the opportunity to practice what they learned! "

**Mary Sadofsky**

Welcome and Information Desk  
Supervisor at Dominican University

## 3 Feet Passing Signs Installed in Edgar County, Campton Hills

Ride Illinois continues to make progress in our campaign to get 3 feet passing state law signs placed on popular cyclist routes. Signs have been installed in Wayne Township, Bartlett, Lake County and now in Edgar County and Campton Hills! 3 feet passing signs are also expected to be installed in Highland Park and areas of Kane County soon.

Last year, we wrote about how Ride Illinois has been working with the IDOT and other agencies to adopt better signs that educate all road users about the 3 feet passing law and provide clarity on how to “share the road.” The law, written and lobbied for by Ride Illinois, addresses a major safety concern for cyclists: drivers “squeezing by” as oncoming traffic approaches.

**Edgar County:** A total of six “State Law – 3 Feet Min To Pass Bicycles” signs were recently installed by Edgar County Highway Department on Terre Haute Road, a popular rural route for bicycling between Paris, IL and Terre Haute, IN. Edgar County Engineer,

Aaron Lawson, contacted us about getting the signs installed in his county after seeing a Ride Illinois e-news story about them. Ride Illinois financed the newly installed signs with funds from our Share the Road license plates.

**Campton Hills:** A “State Law – 3 Feet Min To Pass Bicycles” sign was installed on Campton Hills Road, westbound from St. Charles. Another will be installed eastbound on Beith Road near IL47 soon.

**Kane County:** Kane County Department of Transportation plans to install signs on westbound Beith Rd. west of 47, and on westbound Silver Glen Rd and Hughes Rd. just after



Photo Credit: Joe Van Denburg of J's Bikes Racing

those roads' sidepath bike trails end.

**Highland Park:** Highland Park has approved the installation of dozens of signs this year.

We are advocating for signs in several other communities throughout the state, often with input from local bicycle clubs. We invite cyclists to help us identify problem roads and locations where better signs are needed, and contact us by email at [info@rideillinois.org](mailto:info@rideillinois.org).

## Bike Plans for Charleston and Park Ridge

Ride Illinois is working on municipal bicycle plans for two towns in 2017: Park Ridge and Charleston, IL.

With renewed ambition to become bicycle-friendly, the City of Park Ridge decided to engage Ride Illinois as a bike planning consultant earlier this spring. The project involves an update to the original bike plan Ride Illinois created for the community in 2005 which was never fully implemented. The new, revised plan will result in better suggestions for the city's bike network, as well as non-infrastructure campaigns that will encourage more Park Ridge residents to ride. Active Transportation Alliance will be partnering with us on the plan

as a sub-contractor, and the plan will be completed later this year.

In May, Ride Illinois was awarded a grant from the Lumpkin Family Foundation to support the creation of a municipal bicycle plan for the City of Charleston, home of Eastern Illinois University. The comprehensive plan



will define action steps leading to safe and convenient bicycle transportation between any two points within the city of Charleston, as well as connect off-road trails to Mattoon

(and Amtrak), Fox Ridge State Park, and Lake Charleston. It will include recommendations on infrastructure, education, and enforcement improvements across the city, and should be completed by next year.

On August 3rd, Ride Illinois lead a public brainstorming workshop in Charleston and 50 community members attended and offered their input our bike planning efforts and ideas on where improvements should be made. We are reviewing and incorporating the collected input where appropriate, and look forward to engaging the community again at later stages of our work.

To learn about upcoming Park Ridge and Charleston community meetings, or other opportunities to provide input for these bike plans, please join our email list at [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org) or follow us on Facebook.



# Reviewing IDOT Road Projects

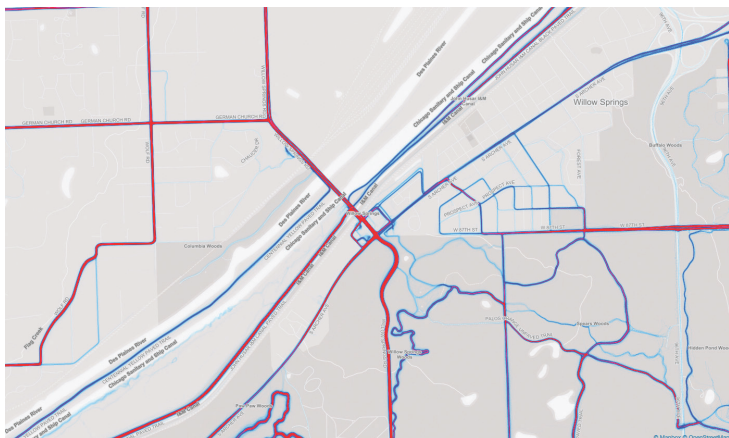
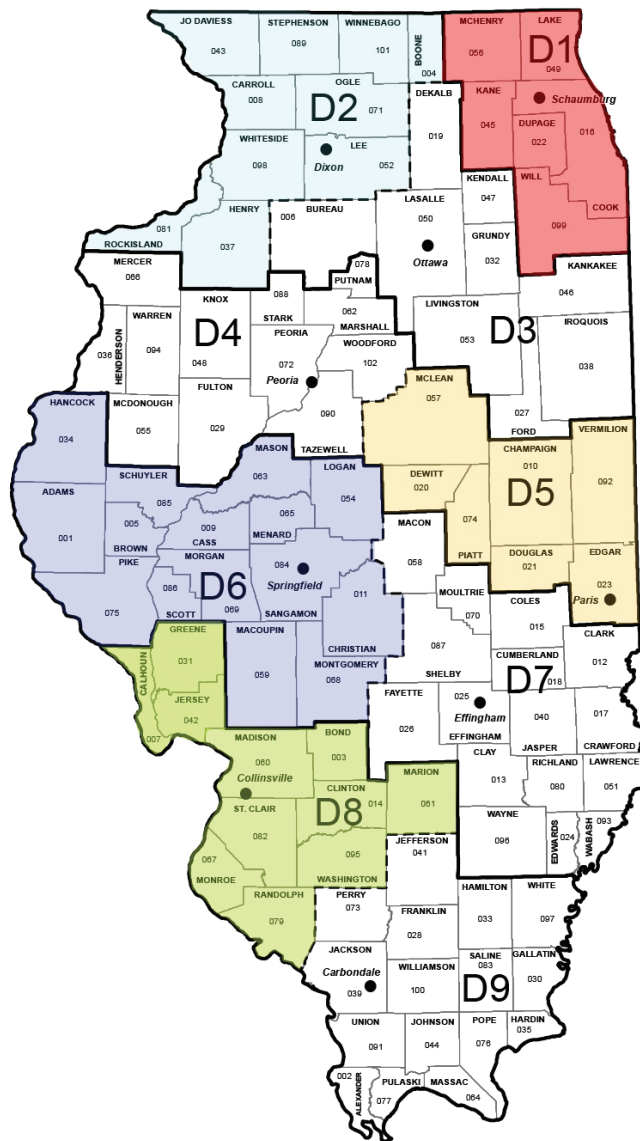
Ride Illinois members consistently cite bike-friendly roads as their highest priority for our work.

For years, we have worked with the state, and some counties, at the road design and project scoping policy levels. Over the past year, Ride Illinois has significantly increased efforts to review individual IDOT projects and to advocate for better bicycling conditions at the early, pre-design stages of this roadwork. We are combing through the five-year plans for each of IDOT's nine districts, one by one, and detailing technical suggestions for IDOT engineers that would improve bicycling safety and accommodations, if incorporated.

For five of IDOT's nine districts, we have studied road segments slated for work and developed recommendations for those locations which are priorities for bicycling. In the months ahead, we will continue this effort for the remaining four districts.

Due to IDOT's poor financial condition, most of their 2018-2023 Multi-Year Plan (MYP) are either simple resurfacing or bridge repair/replacement projects. Their 2010 Complete Streets policy for state-jurisdiction roads (U.S. and state-numbered routes and some other roads) applies mainly to bridge work as well as larger scale projects such as road reconstructions and expansions. However, resurfacing projects can be opportunities for small-scale improvements or possibly larger projects, if support is evident and a town requests such.

Ride Illinois has reviewed both the resurfacing and the larger projects in the MYP for four districts. For each project, we (remotely) used Google imagery and traffic count data to gauge current bicycling conditions. In both rural and urban areas, a worldwide “heat map” of



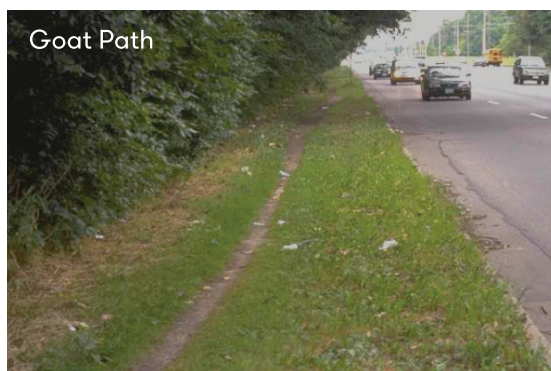
bicycle trips logged by Strava phone app users (example pictured left) gave some indication of bike travel patterns in the area and how popular that road segment is with cyclists. Busier urban roads with “goat paths” – worn dirt tracks in the grass where no sidewalks or off-road adjacent sidepath trails now exist (example pictured right)– indicated road segments with great need, often from those biking or walking by economic, age, or other necessity. Local bike plans were consulted, where known to exist. Finally, some of our members gave additional local perspective, when we shared our findings with them.

For projects deemed as priorities, Ride Illinois wrote letters to IDOT detailing current conditions and needs as well as our recommendations for improvements. Letters were sent for:

- **10 road projects in District 2**  
*Rockford, Moline, and Northwest IL*
- **14 road projects in District 5**  
*Bloomington, Champaign, and East Central IL*
- **17 road projects in District 6**  
*Springfield, Quincy, and West Central IL*
- **8 road projects in District 8**  
*Metro East and Southwest IL*

To reinforce our letters, we meet with IDOT districts to discuss specifics of the projects. These meetings are also a chance to talk more broadly about a range of road design issues affecting bicycling, and to establish or strengthen relationships for future collaboration.

We next tackled the Chicagoland region. IDOT District 1 consists of the six-county Chicago area – and much more roadwork than sparser districts. After meeting with D1 engineers, Ride Illinois reviewed 215 upcoming resurfacing projects. Current conditions and needs were summarized in spreadsheet format, with suggestions and priorities listed for 150 of the projects. Our requests will be reinforced with a petition, which has already garnered nearly 300 signatures.



In addition to Ride Illinois reviewing roadwork lists to proactively provide input, IDOT solicits our (and a few others') input as part of their standard operating procedure in bridge, intersection, reconstruction, and expansion projects. We now are able to routinely respond to these calls with similar information and suggestions as above.

For both our proactive and reactive road project input, we strive to request design features that are at least somewhat in line and appropriate for a given project's original scope and budget. Below is a list of many of the recommendation types from our resurfacing project input for the five districts. Of course, our requests on larger-scale projects were often more aggressive – such as extra width on a bridge replacement.

Our letters have three resulting outcomes: affecting design change(s) for the better, reinforcing positive design features already planned, or identifying issues that ultimately are not addressed in the current road project's design. Meanwhile, we continue advocating at the policy levels to eventually reduce the need for our review of individual road projects.

We'll continue to review the five-year plans for the remaining four IDOT districts over the coming year, and share our recommendations with you. Afterwards, we will turn our attention to urban area counties (as we have started with DuPage and Kane) and cities. As always, we welcome your input and will continue to advocate for bike-friendly road design.

All of our recommendations and completed letters to IDOT as well as online petitions are posted on our website at [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org).

## Recommendation types from resurfacing project input:

- **Add bike lanes (traditional or buffered):** Sometimes, a road has sufficient pavement width to simply add bike lane striping on each side, after resurfacing.
- **Road diet with bike lanes:** Some roads have more lanes than necessary for their traffic levels. A "road diet" from four lanes to three (including a continuous center left-turn lane) can improve motorist safety – often with extra room for bike lanes.



Road Diet BEFORE

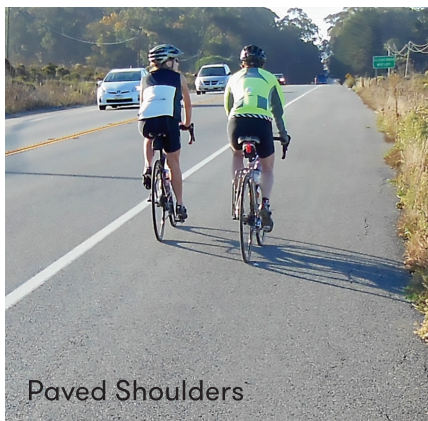


Road Diet AFTER



- **Narrow lanes to provide space for shoulders, bike lanes, or wide curb lanes:**

Often, lanes can be narrowed to 11 or even 10-feet, from the normal 12-feet, without negative traffic capacity or safety effects. Doing so may enable the preferred options of bike lanes or wider paved shoulders. Or, for multilane (4+ lane) roads where those options are not feasible, narrower inside lanes can at least enable 14-foot outer lanes – so cars can pass bikes somewhat more comfortably.



Paved Shoulders

- **Paved shoulders – add or widen:** Where suggested, the recommended width is 4-feet, more under certain conditions, or 3-feet as a last resort. Often, it's a matter of paying existing gravel shoulders.
- **Paved shoulder rumble strips:** These reduce car run-off-the-road crashes, and are becoming more common. However, when built without at least 3 (preferably 4)



Paved Shoulder Rumble Strips

feet of clear shoulder space to their right – or if that space is not routinely swept – cyclists cannot ride on the shoulder. Wherever rumble strips exist or will be added, we call for IDOT's narrower strip design with occasional gaps and at least 3-feet of clear zone.



Demand-Actuated Stoplights

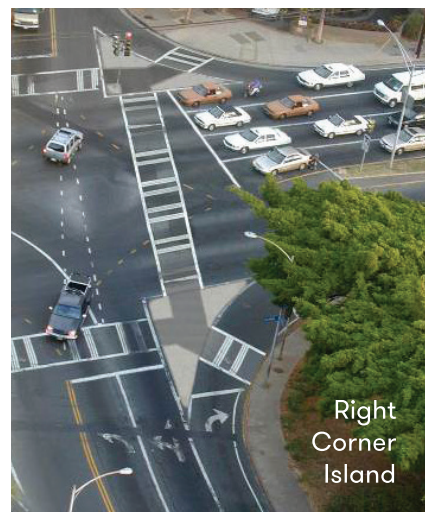
- **On-road bicyclists triggering demand-actuated stoplights:** Often, bicyclists (and motorcyclists) are unable to trigger a green light when crossing a busier street, and motorists behind them stop too far back. Where ped-activation buttons exist, they are usually inaccessible to on-road bikes. However, there are engineering solutions, which we advocate at priority locations as identified by Strava, local bike plans, or cyclists.
- **Adding a trail link:** Occasionally, a trail adjacent to the road is inaccessible to a side street ending at a T-intersection on that road's other side. With local agency (usually a town) cooperation, the project scope can be expanded to add this or other short links.

- **Adding or filling gaps in sidewalks or sidepaths:**

Off-road work is often cheaper when done with other roadwork, but expanding projects' scope requires towns' involvement. Also, another trend is for sidewalks which are built when development occurs to not actually cross an intersection – so curb cuts and ramps may be needed.

- **Add right-corner island(s):**

Trail crossings at major road intersections can greatly improve off-road cyclist safety by using these islands to separate conflicts with turning traffic, shorten crossing distances, and allow crosswalks and stoplines to be placed forward where cars will actually stop.



Right Corner Island

- **Other trail crossing improvements:** A simple crosswalk and warning sign is often not sufficient at mid-block crossings. Further tools include Rapid Rectangular Flashing Beacons, raised median islands, advanced stoplines, and others. At intersections with stoplights, a "Lead Pedestrian Interval" gives off-road cyclists a walk signal shortly before the green, to reduce race condition conflicts with right-turning traffic.

# Cynthia Hoyle Joins our Board of Directors

Ride Illinois recently welcomed our newest Board member Cynthia Hoyle. Cynthia is a veteran transportation planner and a long time bicycle safety advocate. She lives in Urbana, IL and will help represent the statewide bicycle advocacy organization in the Champaign-Urbana and central Illinois region.

## What do you do?

I am a transportation planner with over 30 year in the field. I specialize in active transportation modes, walking, bicycling, and transit. I have a passion for creating communities that give people equal access to mobility regardless of how they travel. I feel strongly that it is wrong that our children, elderly and others who cannot own and operate a car are often stranded. We can create places where people can walk, bicycle and take transit safely and conveniently. To accomplish my goals I became a League Cycling Instructor, helped create and run our Safe Routes to School Program and became a Complete Streets Instructor. I work as a consultant with Alta Planning + Design and the Champaign-Urbana Mass Transit District.

## Describe your first bike:

I had a beautiful radiant blue Schwinn Fiesta I got for my birthday in third grade. I had baskets on the back and rode it to grade school during 4th through 6th grades.



## Where did you go on your last ride?

I ride around Urbana a lot. This morning I bicycled to the U of I campus for an early meeting. I like to take a 7 mile ride in the mornings before 7 a.m., when I am in town, that loops out into the country. There are beautiful views and I enjoy seeing the changes in the landscape as the year progresses with the crops and the wildlife.

## Why do you like to bike?

For the same reasons most people do – it is fun and it is freedom. Riding a bicycle often feels close to flying and I can go places and see things that I cannot by walking or in a vehicle. Walking or running long distances is not an option for me now as I have grouchy knees so bicycling sets me free to go and do things I love.

## What is your vision for Ride Illinois?

I would like to see our organization continue its important work in advocating for safe and equitable bicycling in Illinois. I would also like



to see our organization become the recognized leader in the state in offering education and encouragement for bicycling. My dream is to see bicycle education being taught in all our K-12 schools just as we teach football, baseball, basketball, etc. Most of us will not be able to play football or basketball for the rest of our lives, but almost everyone can continue to ride a bicycle into the future. I would also like to see us be leaders in advocating for bicycling for people who have special physical needs. The fun and freedom of bicycling should be accessible to everyone!

## Tell us a fun fact about you.

I have lived long enough to become a historical figure! My first job out of graduate school was as a community organizer for the Equal Rights Campaign in Oklahoma. Several of us working in the campaign formed a guerrilla theater group and our story was recorded as part of an oral history project named “Red Dirt Women & Power”.



## 300 Miles in 6 Days

Our 15th annual Grand Illinois Bike Tour is now in the books, but we're still thinking about the wonderful memories made at this year's ride.

200 cyclists joined us for our six day ride — many returning riders who bike with us year after year, and approximately 40% new riders joining us from all over the country. We enjoyed beautiful scenery riding along the banks of the Mississippi and Rock Rivers, and rode through gorgeous rolling hills, trails, and countryside. We passed through small, quaint small towns and enjoyed overnights camping or moteling in Dixon, Savanna, Moline, and Sterling. But what makes our Grand Illinois Bike Tour special and keeps people coming back, is the fellowship and shared experiences among our riders.

It warmed our hearts to see families riding together on this year's GIBT. Donald Huntley from Chana, and his daughters Gina Pedraza and Jill Schwartz from Rochelle (pictured above right), participated in GIBT ten years ago in honor of Don's 70th birthday. We were delighted to see the three of them ride again this year to celebrate another milestone birthday, their father's 80th!



We were also happy to have a number of younger, teenaged riders join us this year. Stephen Petres of Brookfield (left), brought along his 12 year old grandson Matthew, our youngest rider on the tour. This was Matthew's first time doing a multi-day bike tour and he handled the challenge of 50+ miles daily like a pro.

For Nan Strandberg from Galesburg (right), and Melinda Gibson from Chicago, bringing family along for the ride meant their adorable dogs also made the journey. These furry friends happily sat in their baskets every day...talk about well-trained!

New to GIBT this year, friends Donna Nowatzki from Countryside, IL and Becki Probst from Barrington, IL went the extra mile and also fundraised in honor of their ride. They brought in a total of \$1,275 of donations to



support Ride Illinois' mission. In recognition of their support, we presented Donna with an e-bike from our sponsor Rad Power Bikes, and Becki a bike rack from our sponsor Hollywood Racks. We were also happy to have the chance to sing Happy Birthday to Donna who celebrated her 50th birthday with us on GIBT.

Many of the towns welcomed our cyclists as we rode through or stayed overnight. From a boy scout group and a horse ranch hosting a couple of our rest stops, to live music at one of our campgrounds, there were opportunities for us to experience and interact with locals from the communities we visited. Many of our riders won't forget the entertainment we were surprised with as we rolled through Port Byron's main street during lunchtime. A local Turkish restaurateur sang folk and pop songs from her native country in front of the Will B. Rolling monument, and was so much fun to watch that a few of our riders started a small dance party.

We know our 200 GIBT riders have many other fun and memorable stories from this past June. Planning for a special 2018 Grand Illinois Bike Tour is already underway, and we look forward to reconnecting with returning riders and hosting new riders next June!

*Thanks to our 2017 Grand Illinois Bike Tour sponsors: Rad Power Bikes, Revolution Brewing, Binny's Beverage Depot, Hollywood Racks, Casey's General Store, Hy-Vee, Sullivan's Foods, Savanna Inn & Suites.*

# Meet Bill Bellman, 14 Year Grand Illinois Bike Tour Veteran

We had a chance to talk with Ride Illinois member, Bill Bellman, about his 14 year history with our annual bike tour and what he enjoys most year after year on our Grand Illinois Bike Tour.

## Where are you from?

I am from Crystal Lake, IL, since 1985, before that from Bourbonnais, IL.

## Why do you bike?

Biking is natural to me. As a kid I always rode a bike, but in college at Northern Illinois University, it became a habit. I even took a course—bicycling—for PE and biked 30 miles a week all over DeKalb County. This was back in the early 70's on a girls 3 speed bike (my sister's) after mine was stolen the semester before. A year after landing a career job in the paint industry, one of the my fellow chemists told me about a bike club forming in Kankakee at the YMCA. It was 1978, and I helped start a club called "The Easy Spokin Bike Club."

The rest is history with club rides and then week long rides from 1979 to the present day, including 14 Grand Illinois Bike Tours, and even a 3,600 mile trip across America in 2009 with America

By Bicycle! Since 2011, I have had the honor of being a full-time volunteer on the bike tour, assisting with the mapping of the routes, working with Ride Illinois staff, and all the other volunteers on the Grand Illinois Bike Tour!

## When was your first Grand Illinois Bike Tour?

I rode my first tour, which used to be known as GITAP (short for Grand Illinois Trail and Parks Bike Tour) in its pilot year in 2003, and have enjoyed 13 out of 14 years of the annual bike tour. After missing the 2005 tour, and missing all the fun, I vowed to Chuck Ostreich, the ride's founder and long-time coordinator, that I would never ever miss another year! Pics are from 2003 and 2004, the first years of the ride.

## What do you look forward to most about the ride this year?

I always look forward to the re-uniting with everyone on the ride



from all the many years!

## In your opinion, what makes this ride stand out from other rides?

The Grand Illinois Bike Tour stands out in that it is put on by Ride Illinois' core staff and 25 or so volunteers. With so many real experienced cyclists, Ride Illinois and it's volunteers have put together the best of things people want to enjoy on a week-long bike vacation, with the highest priority on safety.

## Why should fellow cycling enthusiasts sign up and join the 2018 ride?

What makes the Grand Illinois Bike Tour such a fun week of adventure for me is the great routes, the great staff, and and the great camaraderie with the others that ride!



Clockwise from top left:

Top GIBT fundraisers Becki Probst & Donna Nowatzki

GIBT rider with local Turkish restauranteur in Port Byron

Will B. Rolling Monument in Port Byron

## 2018 Grand Illinois Bike Tour

Join us next June 10-15, 2018 for an Abraham Lincoln history themed Grand Illinois Bike Tour!

The 2018 tour will loop through central Illinois, starting and ending in Clinton, with overnight stops in Lincoln, Springfield (2 nights), and Decatur (2 nights). Stay tuned for more details.

**Registration for the 2018 tour will open November 1 at [www.rideillinois.org](http://www.rideillinois.org)**





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**Make a statement when you drive and help make cycling safer at the same time. The license plates deliver a key message while raising money for Ride Illinois's safety education efforts.**

Visit [rideillinois.org](http://rideillinois.org)

