

June 2, 2010



*Building citizen support  
for policy that protects the  
environment, strengthens  
the economy, and  
enhances quality of life.*

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Michigan House of Representatives  
Transportation Committee

Honorable Transportation Committee Members:

On behalf of the more than 2,000 Michigan Land Use Institute members I am writing to express our support for the Complete Streets bills HB 6151 and 6152.

We support this legislation because creating walkable and bikable communities that are attractive places for young, entrepreneurial professionals to work and live is key to revitalizing Michigan's economy. These bills shift emphasis away from our roads and city streets as "auto only" corridors that divide neighborhoods and promotes planning and design that consider all users and make safer, friendlier communities.

The Michigan Land Use Institute (MLUI) can point to a recent example in Traverse City that clearly demonstrates the benefit of these bills. Many city residents participated in public meetings for the regional Grand Vision citizen visioning process, which documented very strong support for more investment in walking and biking on public roads. The recently approved Traverse City Master Plan calls for specific improvements to Eighth Street, a major arterial and business corridor. So residents were understandably shocked and angry when it was reported that a funding proposal for improvements to Eighth Street had been submitted by the city without any bike lanes or other bike-pedestrian improvements to the road.

The proposed legislation would ensure that all community master plans not only include a complete streets component, but that road agencies must submit projects in conformance with that plan – unless a there is justification for a specific exemption. While some road agencies may express concern about the cost of biking and pedestrian improvements, these bills allow community residents to help determine where and how limited road dollars are spent.

Not only is this bill package important to help local communities in Michigan design roads that are safe for all users, it will also give those same communities an economic edge by making them attractive places for people to visit and live. The new economy is about creating places where people are drawn, especially young people since we are losing so many of them post college graduation.

Over the last 50 years Michigan road planners and engineers have responded to more automobile traffic on city roads with wider roads and more lanes of traffic. But not only have more lanes failed to relieve congestion, there has been an even more devastating effect on communities. People can no longer walk or bike safely along or across these barriers, often resulting in declining property values in these areas and an overall diminished quality of life.

This legislation will help shift the emphasis away from 'autos only' and finally inclusively consider pedestrians and bikers as legitimate users of our public roadways. On behalf of MLUI, I urge you to support passage of these bills.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Lively".

Jim Lively  
Program Director