

June 24, 2010

3600 Camelot Drive SE Grand Rapids, MI 49546
(616) 949-1100 tel (616) 949-7865 fax
www.dakc.us

Michigan House of Representatives
Michigan House Transportation Committee
State of Michigan
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

RE: COMPLETE STREETS, H.B. 6151 and 6152

Dear Rep. Byrnes and Committee Members,

I would like to thank the House Transportation Committee for taking testimony on the Complete Streets legislation, H.B. 6151 and 6152. On behalf of Disability Advocates of Kent County, I would like to voice our support for these bills. As Reps. Roy Schmidt and Tom Pearce can attest, Disability Advocates has been advocating for such policy changes for many years; in fact, we began our efforts even before the movement took on the name, "Complete Streets." As a disability rights organization, we know that the best manner in which to achieve equal access for all persons with disabilities is to work for equal access for all persons. We are convinced that Complete Streets is such an inclusive policy and we urge your passage of the bills.

For far too long, local and statewide transportation policy focused solely on and supported the needs of motorists. The outcome has been the reality that today most of our roadways are accessible only for persons who are in vehicles. On streets like 28th Street and Plainfield Avenue in Kent County, many sections have no sidewalks or bike paths. For any of these streets, the result is that many people cannot get to a bus stop or their desired destination. Walking or wheeling on these streets is extremely dangerous and, in the winter time when snow piles up, these routes are virtually impassable. The opportunity is present through these two bills to begin to change this focus and make our roadway design inclusive of all users.

We understand that there is no cookie-cutter model for a Complete Street. However, in many communities, Complete Streets will include curb ramps, audible or tactile signals for blind pedestrians, longer crossing times, smooth sidewalks and bike paths that are free of obstacles and transit stops that can be easily accessed. Streets that are "complete" will provide everyone the *ability* to travel safely and conveniently, regardless of a temporary or permanent disability.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this testimony. If you have any questions about this, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Dave Bulkowski,
Executive Director