

McHenry County Bicycle Advocates
c/o Eberhard Veit (President)
3502 S. Kilkenny Dr.
Crystal Lake, IL, 60014
Tel: 815-790-0125
E-Mail: eberhard@mcbba-mail.org
eberhard.veit@eisenmann.com
Web: www.McBicycleAdvocates.org



Crystal Lake, Nov. 17, 2008

Mr. Dan Shea, Transportation Committee Chairman
Mr. Joseph Korpalski, Director of Transportation

McHenry County Division of Transportation
16111 Nelson Road

Woodstock, IL 60098

Phone: 815-334-4960, E-Mail: MCDOT@co.mchenry.il.us, dxshea@co.mchenry.il.us,

Concern: **Rakow Road Signed Petition - Request for Bicycle Facilities
with Rakow Road Reconstruction - Public Request Letter.**

Dear Mr. Shea, Mr. Korpalski, members of the transportation committee and McHenry County Board, county engineers:

As announced by me at the Nov. 5, 2008 transportation committee meeting the McHenry Bicycle Advocates have been collecting signatures for a petition to include bicycle facilities with the reconstruction of Rakow Road planned for 2010. On Saturday Nov. 15 I have sent you the first batch of signed petitions, with 227 signatures and more coming in.

This letter is to make suggestions and requests as to the details of such facilities. Please distribute this letter in the upcoming transportation committee meeting on Wed. Nov. 19, 2008. Unfortunately I will not be able to attend as I have to travel for business that day. I will however attend the meeting on Dec. 3rd delivering more petitions and at which time you may ask me any questions that have come up. Please put this on the agenda if applicable.

As you can see from the petitions there is a significant number of people in McHenry County who are asking for bicycle facilities.

1. Current Status of Rakow Road:

- 1.1. Currently Rakow Road is a 2 - 4 lane County Highway with paved shoulders of 4 or more feet width that are usable for bicycle traffic and are used on a regular basis by bicycles.
- 1.2. Rakow is an important East - West connection in Crystal Lake. Whereas RT 14 which is a 4 lane curb and gutter road with no shoulder is extremely dangerous, Rakow Road is usable although not ideal.

2. **Future Plans for Rakow Road:**

- 2.1. The reconstruction plan for Rakow shows a 4 -6 lane divided Highway with 12 ft lanes, curb and gutter and absolutely no space for bicycles or pedestrians nor a stopping lane for broken down cars. This would make it as dangerous as RT 14 currently is.
- 2.2. In essence the road would experience a significant loss of features and safety.
- 2.3. These changes would make the use for bicycles very dangerous. The only options would be to:
 - 1) hug the right curb, which is very hazardous and encourages motorists to pass within the same lane (often not legally possible within 12 or even 13 foot lane widths); or
 - 2) "take the (outside) lane" in such a way that no car can pass unless moving over to the inside lane. This is very annoying to motorists and far from ideal for bicyclists.

3. **Other References to Bicycle Facilities in road reconstruction:**

- 3.1. Please note that the State of Illinois **has adopted SB 0314**, better known as "Complete Streets", requiring IDOT road improvement projects to include safe bike/ped access. SB 0314 is now a law.
- 3.2. Please note that the **Federal Highway Administration** also offers policy guidance at (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bikeped/design.htm>) for towns, counties, and states on these issues. The Design Guidance incorporates a policy statement that bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects (especially urban and suburban) unless exceptional circumstances exist.

4. **Inclusion of Bicycle Facilities on the Rakow Road reconstruction:**

- 4.1. Congratulations for **incorporating the Prairie Trail overpass in the design**. This is a great start. I understand that 80% of the funding comes from the CMAQ federal funding program.
- 4.2. The **best solution for bicycle pedestrian facilities would be a parallel multi use path** that ties in with the Prairie trail.
- 4.3. **Second best would be paved shoulders and side (fog) lines** that would keep that current usability of the road as is for bicycles, while improving car safety. The curbs would remain, but there would be a 4 ft paved width between the travel lanes and the curbs (4 ft pavement from white line to gutter seam). Note that the gutter can not be counted towards the usability for bicycles due to the seam from the pavement to concrete.
 - 4.3.1. If 4 feet in some areas are not possible geometrically a 3 ft to gutter min. lane would be acceptable in those space limited areas.
 - 4.3.2. A paved shoulder also provides an emergency stopping lane of 5-6 ft width for cars (includes curb).
- 4.4. Make sure **Randall** continues with shoulders or a trail. We are aware that there are also plans for Randall but lack of time did not allow us to get involved with this yet but we will shortly. Please consider this letter as public input also for the Randall reconstruction until we can comment in a more detailed manner.

5. **Some detail design ideas:**

- 5.1. Make sure the shoulder width is maintained at intersections, to prevent the need for cyclists to weave into the traffic lane. This includes recessing turning curbs and traffic islands from the travel lanes by at least 3 feet of the shoulder width. (A bad example is the island at Rakow and Virginia on the South Side).
- 5.2. As shown in the bike lane section of the AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, use dashed lines across right turn lanes to indicate to cars to use merge techniques and to pay attention to other users.
- 5.3. Tie in shoulders or path to Prairie Trail. This is important as a feed to the Prairie Trail and to get onto the bridge. If you don't you will soon see dirt paths as seen in many other areas with lack of connections.

- 5.4. Tie in shoulders properly to all the roads that will cross Rakow.
 - 5.5. Rumble strips: One of the members of the transportation committee mentioned rumble strips. There are bicycle-friendly rumble strip designs which function correctly for motorists while leaving clear space for cyclists. We would be glad to provide further information on this.
 - 5.6. The McHenry County Bicycle Advocates would gladly work with you constructively on the details.
6. **Good examples:**
- 6.1. Algonquin Road West of Rakow has curb & gutter and shoulders. I have not ridden the whole length but on the stretch I did it worked okay.
 - 6.2. Virginia Road in Crystal Lake also has a shoulder and curb and gutter and works mostly well.
 - 6.3. More examples can be given upon request.
7. **Other Comments:**
- 7.1. If money is a concern don't cut the turn on Rakow and the money should be available as the construction could use the existing road bed.
 - 7.2. I understand that on all County Roads you consider a 4 ft paved shoulder the standard. I congratulate you to that decision and hope to see this happen on all future construction. Please also make this the minimum requirement for Rakow. Min. 4 ft for bicycles!
 - 7.3. MCBA will work on a future bike route / trail plan and would very much like to cooperate with you.
 - 7.4. **As you all know, it will never be less expensive to build bicycle facilities along Rakow then now with the Reconstruction of the roadway.** While providing flattened ground for future facilities is something, retrofitting later – perhaps after a tragedy, as seen on US14 near Cary – is always more expensive.
8. **The Goals of the McHenry County Bicycle Advocates:**
- 8.1. Get the political decision from the MCDOT, County Board, City and Village Boards to incorporate bicycle facilities for those who bike by choice – or by economic (or other) necessity.
 - 8.2. Work with all of the above to secure funding for the project if needed. (Details to be discussed)
 - 8.3. Discuss and give input to the incorporation and type of facilities. (I know that MCDOT is very experienced and will do a good job however we would like to give some input from everyday commuting experience) (I Eberhard Veit bicycle commute 1,500 to 2,000 miles per year within McHenry County and also have good connections to MCBC and LIB)
 - 8.4. We would like to work with you closely in the future with regards to reconstruction, resurfacing and re-striping of roads with bicycle and pedestrian traffic in mind.
 - 8.5. Many improvements are very simple and not costly at all if considered right away. At a later date we would gladly discuss such issues with you.

Please let me know if you would like to discuss any of the issues raised above.

Thanks in advance for a written response prior to the Dec. 3rd transportation committee meeting.

Regards ***Eberhard Veit***



President of McHenry County Bicycle Advocates
- www.McBicycleAdvocates.org

Member of:

- MCBC - McHenry County Bicycle Club - LIB - League of IL bicyclists - CBF - Chicagoland Bicycle Federation
- IL Trails Conservancy - RTC - Rails to Trails conservancy - League of American Bicyclists

Copies to:

- * **Ken Koehler**, Chairman of the McHenry County Board, kdkoehler@co.mchenry.il.us
- * Mayor of Lake in the Hills - **Ed Plaza**, via Gerald Sagona, Village Administrator Sagona Gerald - LITH <gsagona@LITH.org>
- * Mayor - **Aaron Shepley**, via Gary Mayerhofer, City Manager Crystal Lake. Mayerhofer Gary - City of CL <gmayerhofer@crystallake.org>
- * Congressman **Donald Manzullo** (IL-16, (secured 5.72 Million for project)
Fax: 915-356-9803
- * **Wally Dittrich**, P.E., Design Manager MCDOT,
"Dittrich Wally - MCDOT" <WRDittrich@co.mchenry.il.us>
- * **MCCD** - McHenry County Conservation District, MCCD@MCCDistrict.org
- * **Northwest Herald**, Chris Krug - General Manager & Executive Editor
ckrug@nwherald.com
- * **Anne Lunk** (President of MCBC - McHenry County Bicycle Club)
"Lunk Anne - MCBC" <aanno@mc.net >
- * **Ed Barsotti** (Executive Director LIB - League of IL bicyclists)
"Barsotti Ed - LIB" <ed@bikelib.org> ,
- * **Bev Moore** (President - IL Trails Conservancy)
"Moore Bev - IL Trails Conservancy" <bebomoore@aol.com>