

June 17, 2010

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

To the members of the House Transportation Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to testify today. I would like to voice my support for the Complete Streets legislation, H.B. 6151 and 6152.

Over a year ago, dozens of residents in Traverse City asked MDOT and the Traverse City Commission for a 'rethink' of Division St. We rallied because as planned, a proposed construction project didn't include better accessibility for pedestrians and bike commuters, nor did it have a context sensitive approach. *It was more of the same.*

In January this year, the city commission received over 200 emails in support of bike lanes and enhanced traffic calming on a 2-block long project of 8th Street. A small section of road, but nonetheless symptomatic of poor transportation planning. Ultimately, we failed to implement any meaningful enhancements on 8th St. despite unprecedented public support, considerable energy between agencies and even involvement by Representative Wayne Schmidt and Senator Jason Allen. People in Traverse City have been asking for over 30 years for more non-motorized choices and inclusive infrastructure, and it is still a struggle.

Communities across Michigan are asking for an approach that not only moves cars and trucks, but that moves people while increasing access for all with the ultimate goal of building *safe, comfortable and equitable neighborhoods*. As transportation dollars are dwindling, it is crucial that projects are properly planned and widely accepted from their inception. A complete streets policy will be a critical tool to motivate reluctant transportation agencies. It may also serve these same agencies by garnering public support for increasing local road mileages.

Complete streets legislation is the best tool currently on the table to achieve a coherent statewide policy that will help create a balance of priorities and funding. It will help to avoid the incomplete road projects, like those above. When projects are delayed because they don't meet community expectations it costs additional time, energy and money to complete.

The state, as the major source of funds of local projects, needs to lead. A complete streets bill is an excellent start. I agree with the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition's assessment, building streets that better serve active users and public transportation will *boost the economy, improve safety and promote public health*.

States and cities of tomorrow will be measured on how well they provide transportation choices and how they help places thrive as communities. The sooner we move state and local government agencies in this direction, the sooner we will reap the benefits.

Sincerely,
Gary L Howe
926 Lincoln St.
Traverse City, MI
49686