
Walking and biking projects in Rebuild Illinois

Support HB4276 (Moylan), SB3125 (Collins); Make it easier for low-income communities to access capital plan funds

IN BRIEF

Last year, a large, bipartisan group of legislators advocated for including walking and bicycling funding in the 2019 capital bill. Thanks to their efforts, the Rebuild Illinois capital plan includes \$50 million annually for walking and bicycling projects. Funds are awarded through the existing, federally funded Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program (ITEP), where demand for projects exceeds available dollars by a factor of seven. The new funds are prioritized for low-income, “high-need” communities.

THE PROBLEM

As work begins with the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) on implementation, it’s become evident that the current language lacks clarity on two key points:

1. How often IDOT should set aside the \$50 million in new state funds for ITEP.
2. How to define “high-need” communities.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

The bill clarifies the walking and bicycling portion of the capital plan:

1. **Each year, in addition to any other funding to ITEP the Department shall set aside \$50,000,000 received by the Department from the Road Fund.**

WHY?

During work on implementation, IDOT expressed uncertainty as to whether the funding is annual or is for each two-year grant cycle. Legislators understood the funds to be allocated annually throughout the process of preparing the capital plan.

2. **At least 25 percent of funding shall be directed towards projects in high-need communities, based on community median income and percentage of population living below the federal poverty line.**

WHY?

During work on implementation, IDOT found property tax base data to be difficult to access and not a strong indicator of a community’s need. The data for percentage of population living below the federal poverty line is more available and reliable.



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