



25TH DISTRICT  
STATE CAPITOL  
P.O. BOX 30014  
LANSING, MI 48909-7514  
PHONE: (517) 373-1772  
TOLL-FREE: (877) JONS025  
FAX: (517) 373-5906  
WEBSITE: [house.mi.gov/jswitalski](http://house.mi.gov/jswitalski)

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**JON SWITALSKI**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**APPROPRIATIONS**  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT (MVC)  
INVESTIGATIONS,  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
AFFAIRS AND OVERSIGHT  
JOINT CAPITAL OUTLAY  
TRANSPORTATION

House Committee on Transportation  
May 27, 2010

As policy makers, we wrestle each and every day to find ways to revive our state and economy. One element that I believe is important to revitalizing our state is re-thinking how transportation meets the needs of everyone who walks, bikes, buses or drives in order to get around, and in essence completing our streets.

I have been working on this legislation for some months, talking with many different groups and citizens and explaining what complete streets is; and everyone I've talked to is supportive of it.

My goal with this legislation is to ensure that all future transportation projects will consider all users of the roads, not just motorist. The great people of this state pay the vehicle license and registration fees, gas tax and sales tax which are used to build Michigan roads. People in Michigan want to use their money to build safe roads that they can use when they are in and out of their car.

People don't feel safe crossing a 6 to 7 lane wide state trunkline in communities like mine and most cities have state trunklines that run through them in Michigan.

Our elders don't want to be a prisoner in their own home because they aren't able to drive any more or don't feel safe crossing the streets.

Parents and children want to be able to walk or bike to school safely.

Young people don't want to drive everywhere and then find a parking spot if they can walk or bike it there. Young people are moving to desirable places that are walkable and bikable then finding jobs, not the other way around.

Michigan citizens aren't the only ones who feel this way either. Many states throughout the country are adopting complete street policies for their roads. Minnesota just passed a complete streets policy this week. Michigan must do this too if it wants to keep and attract residents and businesses to Michigan in this global economy. We must think differently.

House Bill 6051 aims to do just that. The bill requires the Michigan Department of Transportation and local road agencies to adopt complete streets policies not later than 2 years after the act is adopted.

It allows the department and local road agencies project-specific exemptions if:  
non-motorized usage of the transportation project is prohibited by state or federal law;  
compliance with complete streets policy would be an excessively expensive component of the total project cost given the likely level of use of the project; and  
population and employment densities in the vicinity of a proposed project may be considered as indicators of likely levels of use and among other factors.

The bill also creates a complete streets advisory council to assist local road agencies with developing and implementing of complete streets policies. Other duties include advising appropriate state agencies on complete streets policies, programs, and facilities; promoting complete streets and serving as a clearinghouse for complete streets information such as financial, technical, and best practices. The advisory council would dissolve on January 1, 2021, and is required to report to the Governor and legislature a summary of the council's proceedings.

The other component of this legislation is the coordination of the department and local road agencies on transportation projects. MDOT does great work for our state but we are asking them to do a little more when it comes to coordinating with locals on state trunklines in cities. On several occasions the department has not coordinated with local road agencies on state trunkline projects in that local road agencies' jurisdiction.

Last fall Mt. Pleasant City Commission unanimously rejected MDOT's \$4.5 million road project for Mission Street, because the project did not meet the city's vision for Mission Street.

Safety was their major concern. Business owners and residents have asked for complete streets to address concerns of slowing down traffic and making it safe for not only vehicles but pedestrians too.

Last year in Kalamazoo locals struggled with MDOT to safely accommodate pedestrians and people with disabilities when removing a traffic light on a busy intersection of West Main and Fletcher.

MDOT finally reversed its decision to remove the light after a hundred residents from the neighborhood sought to keep the signal, citing safety concerns from the increased car speeds since the light was changed to blink mode. I think Rep. Jones said it best in the local newspaper article, "while a good flow in traffic may be desirable for MDOT, pedestrians need a break in traffic."

Last year Traverse City adopted a new infrastructure policy that emphasizes complete streets policies. The city is dedicating 10% of its infrastructure budget to sidewalks, bikeways and other people-friendly infrastructure.

The City of Traverse City and the City Commission there are currently facing a dilemma regarding the re-construction of Eighth Street. Unfortunately MDOT's designed plan does not provide traffic calming, bike lanes and better pedestrian crossings and sidewalks- to make it a complete street.

Michigan needs better coordination within its transportation infrastructure and needs roads that make Michigan's communities walkable and bikeable.