



State of Connecticut
GENERAL ASSEMBLY



Commission on Children

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A vote to make our state a healthier place Connecticut lawmakers move to improve bicycle and pedestrian access

In a victory against childhood obesity and for the health of all Connecticut residents, both chambers of the General Assembly have adopted the “complete streets” bill, which takes several steps to promote bicycle and pedestrian access across the state.

The legislation, Senate Bill 735, awaits the governor’s signature. It:

- requires, beginning October 1, 2010, that at least 1 percent of state funds for highway or street projects go toward creating facilities for “all users” including, at least, bikeways and sidewalks with curb cuts or ramps. This is not new spending; it’s a reallocation.
- establishes an 11-member Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, which will report annually to the governor, the transportation commissioner, and the legislature’s Transportation Committee on what’s being done to improve the bicycling and walking environment in Connecticut.
- requires the transportation commissioner to report, later this year and next year, to the Transportation Committee and the advisory board with a list of transportation projects he has undertaken that contain bicycle and pedestrian access.

“The creation of safe cycling and walking lanes and paths are one way of attacking our growing health problems and obesity rates,” said Elizabeth C. Brown, legislative director of the Connecticut Commission on Children, which was part of a coalition of groups supporting the legislation. She noted that one in four Connecticut high school students are overweight or obese, increasing the likelihood of adult obesity by an estimated 80 percent. In one year, obesity-related health problems in Connecticut added \$856 million in adult medical expenses, including \$665 million in taxpayer funds in Medicaid and Medicare costs.

Brown also pointed to the simple fact that roads without cycling and pedestrian infrastructure are deadly. In 2007 alone, 35 pedestrians were killed on Connecticut roads, mainly in suburban areas lacking pedestrian accommodations like wide sidewalks or delayed traffic signals.

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