



**A Problem Solving Manual for
Advocates and Transportation
Professionals in New York State**

A Community Safety Campaign Project of the
New York Bicycling Coalition
Made Possible by funding from the
Governor's Traffic Safety Committee



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Special thanks go to the county working group members who volunteered their time and expertise. Each group represented a broad array of public agencies and private advocacy interests—the core constituencies targeted in this manual. We will be relying on these work groups, and others, for the successful delivery of the next phase in this project—which is the design and delivery of regional workshops throughout 2002. The workshops will utilize this manual as a centerpiece in training advocates and professionals to solve difficult problems in local road systems for the benefit of cyclists, pedestrians and anyone else with a desire to move safely and efficiently through our state's varied transportation landscape.

Information about the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee and other traffic-related information can be found at:
www.nysgtsc.state.ny.us



Contact information for these groups can be found on our website at www.nybc.net

Albany County Working Group: John Borel, Dom DeCecco, Katherine Forster, Michael Franchini, Kevin McLoughlin, Bob Montesano, Henrietta O’Grady, Don Robertson, Paul Russell, Bert Schou, Monique Wahba, and Peg Warren.

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We would also like to call attention to the **great work being done in New York State by other groups also concerned with bicycling and walking**, including more than a hundred local cycling clubs (for this study, we worked with members of Paumonok Bicycling of Long Island, the Rochester Bicycling Club, and the Mohawk Hudson Cycling Club), the Department of Health’s Healthy Heart Program, Transportation Alternatives, The Tri-State Transportation Campaign, The Neighborhood Open Space Coalition, and Right-of-Way.

Many **national organizations** are responsible for increasing awareness of bicycling and pedestrian issues, including, among many others, the League of American Bicyclists, the National Bicycle Safety Network, the National Center for Bicycling and Walking, and the Surface Transportation Policy Project.



INTRODUCTION

This manual provides suggestions and user-friendly information-gathering tools for “bridging the gap” between advocacy and engineering. The goal is to enable two important constituencies with a shared interest in bicyclist and pedestrian safety to understand each other’s unique needs and perspectives.

The original concept for this manual came out of a desire to compile information that would promote better collaboration between experts and laypersons, but to do so using a hands-on approach. A working-group in each of four selected counties (Albany, Kings, Monroe, and Suffolk) helped choose locations in each county to serve as a baseline for understanding how one might go about creating project proposals for individual intersections. (See Chapter 8 for more background on selection of the county’s and individual intersections.) The advocates and transportation professionals who worked with us over the course of this manual’s development helped us understand and articulate some obstacles to communication, and some strategies for making improvements.

We realize the categories of “advocate” and “transportation professional” are somewhat problematic. For one thing, they are not mutually exclusive; many individuals may be both. The term “transportation professionals” refers to a wide range of engineers and planners, including consultants and government staff from the local, state, and national levels. “Advocates” is also a broad term, and one with which many people do not even identify; they may consider themselves nothing other than responsible, involved citizens.

Next Phase

This manual is the outcome of the first phase of the Community Safety Campaign. One important result is the understanding that an intersection-based approach does not lend well to solutions at the route-level. This is particularly evident in the case of bicycling infrastructure: the solutions presented in the intersection case studies in Chapter 8 are heavily weighted towards pedestrian solutions. Future studies should explore the application of good transportation design to longer routes in order to establish safe and comprehensive transportation networks.

Which brings us to Phase Two. This manual will serve as the basis for the next phase of the Community Safety Campaign, in which NYBC will hit the road, first in each of the four pilot counties and then around the entire state, to host training workshops with advocates and transportation professionals. These workshops will promote better communication between these two groups, centered around actual transportation projects in these communities. The need for route-level analysis will be an important part of this outreach phase.

Interested in taking part in a training workshop in your community?

We’d like to hear from you.

write us at
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or email us at
nybc@nybc.net

There are many sources for information about ISTEA and TEA-21.

See the DOT website
www.fhwa.dot.gov/teaz1/

BACKGROUND

Bicyclist and Pedestrian Crashes

Many bicyclist and pedestrian crashes are preventable. Better engineering, innovative and widespread education strategies, and enforcement of existing laws can make the difference.

The number of crashes involving cyclists and pedestrians is greater than generally recognized. In 1997, 383 pedestrians and 49 cyclists were killed in New York State. The number of injuries, over 30,000 in 1995, and the associated medical costs are equally astounding. On average, bicyclist and pedestrian-related crashes cause more serious injuries than those between automobiles.

Further, these crashes involve all age groups, and while the actual number of crashes may vary by population density, they occur in all areas—urban, suburban, and rural. These crashes represent great social tragedy to the individuals and families involved, and to society as a whole in terms of health-care costs and lost productivity.

Transportation Policy: ISTEA and TEA-21

Bicycling and pedestrian advocates are usually familiar with two pieces of legislation that have changed the course of transportation policy in the United States: the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA), and its follow-up, the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-21). These acts made significant funds available for bicycling and pedestrian projects. Bicycling and pedestrian advocates should understand the basic outcomes of this legislation.

ISTEA changed transportation policy by specifying transportation planning be done for inter-modal transportation, that is, for diverse forms of transport not just motor vehicles. TEA-21 continued ISTEA's programs and provided additional funding for facilities.

Under ISTEA, Transportation Improvement Plans (TIPs) become the main vehicle for policy. Regional offices of state transportation departments develop lists of desired projects, TIPs, which the state compiles into a single list, called the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Perhaps the surest way to get a project completed is to get it on one of these lists. Projects on the list will likely be funded and carried out.

But advocates must compete for limited space on the list. You can make a difference by participating in decision-making bodies, regional DOT offices, Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committees that prepare TIPs and STIPs. Even a proposal is no guarantee work will actually be completed, as a variety of events may cause priorities to change.

And don't forget: advocates should not only work to get a project on the TIP, they should also be working to make sure that bike and pedestrian facilities are *integrated* into every highway and transit project on the TIP. This is how Seattle, Portland, Denver and other top cities are successful at getting results in the short term.