

Dan

I hope you can pass my thoughts along to the members of the 53 Task Force

Thanks Wayne Mikes

Mikes Bike Shop

Palatine

53 Bike Expressway

Since the land designated for the tollway extending Rt53 will not now be used for a road, I would like you to think about another mode of transportation, bicycles. Bike riding has increased two-fold since 2010. This increasing number of bikers need a safe space to call their own. As there is currently no safe way to bike from 53 to Grayslake, I'd like to propose that the best use of this land would be a bike expressway. This land was originally purchased for transportation, so using it for a bike expressway would keep the original purpose in mind while allowing for a more environmentally friendly transportation method.

A bike expressway would represent a social, economic, and environmental benefit to the villages along the way. This better use of the land should have two separate bike paths, each lane moving in opposite directions, like a normal road. Each lane would be between 15 and 18 feet wide, thus allowing for walkers and bikers to coexist peacefully. This expressway could connect to other bike paths, like the Millennium Trail, and would even help create access to Lake Michigan, connecting to the Des Plaines trail as well. Connecting all these communities allows for better communication and commerce with the biking community. Having more space for bikers also cuts down on the amount of motor vehicle traffic, cutting down on traffic jams and accidents, and lowering CO2 emissions as well. Biking also reduces risk of stroke and other heart diseases, lowers stress levels, and helps to keep body and mind active.

Communities in the past have implemented a similar idea for unused or abandoned railroads. This is called railbanking and it's the preservation of old railroad right-of-ways to be used for future trail use. Since these old railroads already connected communities separately from cars, this is a safe way for bikers to travel from city to city with ease. One example is the Jane Adams Trail connecting Freeport to Madison, or the Great Western Trail connecting Chicago to Des Moines, Iowa. These trails have been built with the help of the local forestry services, to keep track of the environmental impact of the construction.

Building this bicycle expressway is an opportunity that Illinois cannot afford to pass up. Creating a bike expressway will encourage others to think about bikes in a new light, bring cycling to the forefront of transportation. As biking as a means of transportation, exercise, and recreation becomes more and more common, the need for new trails becomes more prevalent to ensure the safety of both driver and biker. This is why a bike expressway would be the best use of the land that was the 53 tollway.

Thank You for your time

Wayne Mikes