Illinois Department of Transportation
Omer Osman • Secretary
Chicago Department of Transportation
Gia Biagi • Commissioner

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IDOT and CDOT reach agreement to streamline implementation of safety improvements

Collaboration to help address rise in traffic fatalities, improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Transportation and the Chicago Department of Transportation have come to a new agreement that will streamline and accelerate the process of delivering proven and scalable safety measures on local roads and state routes within the City of Chicago. The Memorandum of Understanding, signed by Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman and CDOT Commissioner Gia Biagi, establishes preapproval of certain infrastructure designs related to Chicago's urban street context to improve safety for people walking, biking and driving.

"Today's MOU builds on our partnership with CDOT and outlines concrete steps that we are taking to address safety, while further enhancing our ongoing collaboration and joint commitment to making roads safer for all users," said Osman. "Together, we will continue to work towards our joint goal of zero fatalities and to make Chicago and Illinois roads as safe and accessible as possible."

"As set out in the City of Chicago's Strategic Plan for Transportation and funded through Mayor Lightfoot's Chicago Works local capital bond, CDOT is leveraging all our projects to implement high-impact safety solutions," said Biagi. "This MOU is an important step forward in creating safer streets for our most vulnerable road users, such as children, people with disabilities, older adults and people walking, biking, and rolling."

The improved collaboration between CDOT and IDOT ultimately will help to streamline the approval and delivery process for implementing proven safety countermeasures to help address the trend of rising traffic fatalities in Chicago, Illinois and across the country, particularly among bicyclists and pedestrians. The MOU will go into effect immediately and establishes:

- A standardized list of traffic safety infrastructure designs routinely submitted by CDOT that will not be subject to comprehensive IDOT review prior to installation. This will allow the city to design and self-certify curb cuts and other sidewalk improvements to make streets more walkable and accommodating for nonvehicular traffic, establishes 10-foot-wide vehicular lanes as the minimum lane width.

- Clarified "Design Vehicle" standards to emphasize pedestrian safety at intersections. A design vehicle is the largest vehicle that is likely to use the facility with considerable frequency and its selection can significantly impact a road's design and geometry. By

agreeing to a more appropriate design vehicle for urban streets, certain state routes will be able to add safety features, such as curb extensions and bump-outs that shorten crossing distances for pedestrians.

- An IDOT-CDOT working group to help formulate future agreements and enhance existing interagency collaboration.

The MOU applies to the approximately 400 miles of road that are under state jurisdiction in Chicago, excluding expressways. These include some of the most heavily traveled streets in the City.

“We are incredibly encouraged by CDOT and IDOT’s commitment to drive meaningful and action-oriented strategies to improve safety,” said Erin Aleman, executive director of the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. “It is only through close collaboration and partnership as a region that we will succeed in making our streets safer, more accessible and equitable, and most importantly, in saving lives.”

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, traffic fatalities have risen sharply nationwide and in Chicago, with a range of factors likely contributing to these trends, such as driver behavior, increased speed and some legacy street designs, with speed as one of the most important factors in determining crash risk and crash severity.

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