

**Designing For All Users
Mega Issue
Overview**

May 2006

ITE Designing for All Users Mega Issue – Summary

Introduction

Transportation professionals find themselves working in a complex world. They strive to balance the needs of a broad range of transportation users within diverse neighborhoods and contexts. To succeed, they must design transportation systems that not only provide safe access and mobility but also enhance the community and surrounding areas they serve. The successful design of roadways is largely dependent on the transportation professional's ability to define, understand and meet the needs of a diverse set of roadway users. To stimulate discussion and raise awareness of this issue, "Designing for All Users," has been identified as a "mega issue" for Institute focus and attention.

As a mega issue, this topic was brought to ITE's International Board of Direction (IBOD) for in-depth discussion. The intent of the discussion was to identify the **priority roles** that ITE should play and the **specific areas** of designing for all users that are most significant for ITE members. The IBOD discussion was based on a white paper developed by ITE staff with input from a focus group representing several of ITE's Councils.

There are many dimensions to designing for all users and multiple roles that ITE can play. However, the IBOD recognized that it is not feasible for ITE as an association to be a leader in all areas. The deliberations of the IBOD were intended to focus ITE's energies in the areas with the highest benefit to ITE members and where ITE contributions and leadership would be most worthwhile. Subject areas and roles that did not rise to the highest priority remain important to ITE and will be pursued as opportunities arise; however, the high priority areas are those where ITE will make a concerted effort to play a major role within the transportation community.

Results

The following is a synthesis of the main points and priorities distilled from the IBOD deliberations. The IBOD discussion on designing for all users focused on identifying the key institutional/policy and technical activity areas that are most suited to ITE leadership and of interest to ITE members. During the discussion of issues, ITE Board members noted roles that ITE should play and considered the potential audiences best served. This summary combines the comments and rankings that were provided by the IBOD and were used to develop proposed roles for ITE.

Themes from the IBOD discussion:

- ❑ ITE should serve as a key **provider** of technical information to facilitate and promote **flexible design**. ITE must also **partner** with other organizations and serve as an **advocate** to ensure acceptance and adoption of flexible design criteria.
- ❑ ITE should serve as a **provider** and **clearinghouse of professional development** materials addressing designing for all users. As a provider, ITE should develop tools such as informational reports, recommended practices, web seminars, web briefings, on-line learning, sessions and seminars.
- ❑ One of the most significant challenges in designing for all users is understanding the **safety and operational impacts of alternative designs**. ITE should serve as a **provider** and disseminator of existing research on this topic. ITE should also **partner** with other organizations to identify gaps in existing resources and establish a framework for funding new research.
- ❑ ITE should work with the ITE pedestrian and bicycle council to **provide** technical materials necessary to accommodate **pedestrians and bicyclists**. ITE should also serve and an **advocate** for integrated planning and design processes that provide for the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and bicyclists.
- ❑ ITE's existing partnerships with the US Access Board and Easter Seals Project Action, uniquely positions us to serve as a **convener** amongst the many diverse stakeholders on **accessibility** issues. ITE should also serve as a **provider** of targeted information that specifically meets the technical needs of our membership. As an **advocate**, ITE should

also provide timely information and respond to changes in legislation with direct impact on transportation professionals. ITE should **partner** with other organizations to support needed research.

- ❑ It is recognized that *all* needs of *all* users can never be fully accommodated. However, it is acknowledged that all roadways must meet some level of accommodation for all potential users. ITE should be a **provider** of information to assist in **prioritizing and balancing the needs of all users** in accordance with a community vision.
- ❑ ITE should primarily serve as a **partner** in addressing issues related to design for **emergency services, transit** and **younger/older** pedestrians and drivers.
- ❑ ITE should be a **provider** and **partner** on issues related to **safe routes to school**. Work should be done through with the Traffic Engineering Council to develop a technical resource on transportation issues related to school siting. Partnerships with other leading organizations such as the University of North Carolina, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Partnership for a Walkable America should also be continued.
- ❑ ITE should continue to be a **provider** of information on **site design for all users**. Specifically, ITE should continue to provide tools and techniques for integrating land use development with the surrounding street network and adjacent land uses. ITE should also work with the Canadian District of ITE and the Transportation Planning Council to progress ITE's proposed recommended practice on this topic.
- ❑ ITE should continue to monitor developments in lower priority areas such as special event planning and freight/curbside delivery.

As mentioned previously, many other aspects of designing for all users were discussed. The above items constitute the highlights of the IBOD discussion. The table below organizes the key topics, the ITE role and the relative priorities. The intent is to maintain a high degree of attention on activities and projects (either volunteer or contractual) in the high priority areas particularly for the near-term. Other areas will be pursued as opportunities arise and as time and resources permit. These other areas may be focus areas in future years.

| Designing for All Users | Priority | Provider | Convener | Advocate | Partner | Clearinghouse |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Flexibility in Design | H | X | | X | X | |
| Professional Development | H | X | | X | | X |
| Safety Impacts of Designing for All Users | H | X | | | X | X |
| Pedestrians and Bicyclists | H | X | | X | X | |
| Prioritizing the Needs of Users | M | X | | X | | |
| Awareness and Outreach | M | | | X | X | |
| Accessibility | M | X | X | X | X | |
| Younger/Older Drivers/Pedestrians | M | | | X | X | |
| Transit | M | X | | | X | |
| Site Development for All Users | M | X | | | | |
| Safe Routes to School/School Siting | M | X | | X | X | |
| Emergency Services | M | X | | X | X | |
| System Integration | M | X | | X | X | |
| Parking | M | X | | | X | |
| Special Events | L | X | X | | X | |
| Freight/Curbside Management | L | X | | X | X | |
| Community/Stakeholder Involvement | L | X | | X | X | |