

Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities

2012 • Fourth Edition



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF
STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHTO
THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION

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THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

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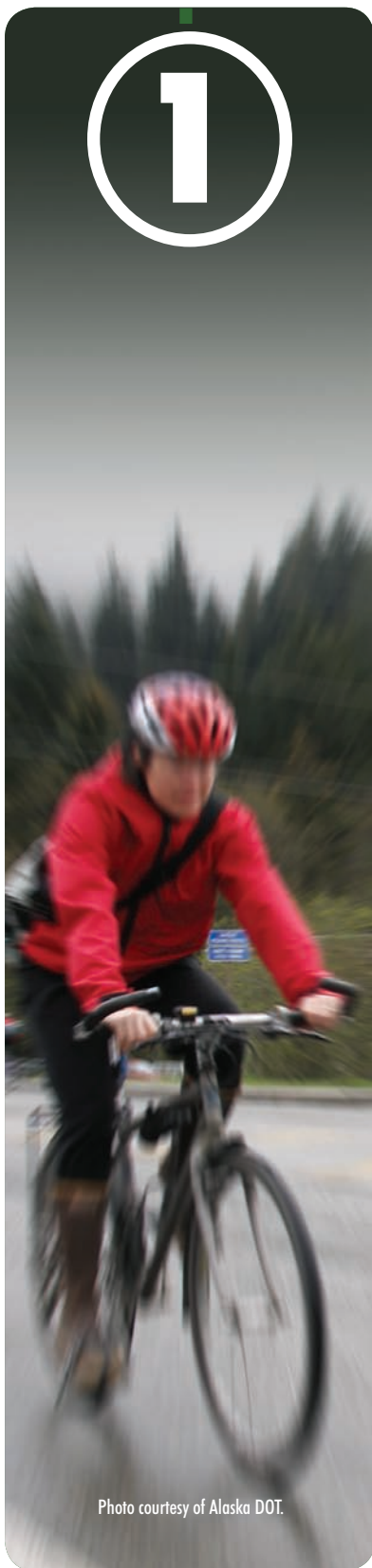


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Introduction

1.1 DESIGN IMPERATIVE

Bicycle travel has played a historic role in transportation. Even before the invention of the automobile, the League of American Wheelmen promoted improved traveled ways.

Bicycling is recognized by transportation officials throughout the United States as an important transportation mode. A policy statement, released in early 2010 by the U.S. Department of Transportation, emphasizes the needs and requirements to integrate bicycling (and walking) into transportation systems (4). Over a quarter of the population in the United States, over the age of 16 rides bicycles (3). Nationwide, people are recognizing the convenience, energy efficiency, cost effectiveness, health benefits, economic development, and environmental advantages of bicycling.

Local, state, and federal agencies are responding to the increased use of bicycles by implementing a wide variety of bicycle-related projects and programs. This interest in bicycle transportation calls for an understanding of bicycles, bicyclists, and bicycle facilities. This guide addresses these issues and clarifies the elements needed to make bicycling a more safe, comfortable, and convenient mode of transportation.

All roads, streets, and highways, except those where bicyclists are legally prohibited, should be designed and constructed under the assumption that they will be used by bicyclists. Therefore, bicyclists' needs should be addressed in all phases of transportation planning, design, construction, maintenance, and operations (1). All modes of transportation, including bicycles, should be jointly integrated into plans and projects at an early stage so that they function together effectively.

1.2 PURPOSE

Bicyclists should be expected on roadways, except where prohibited, and on shared use paths. Safe, convenient, well-designed, well-maintained facilities, with low-crash frequencies and severities, are important to accommodate and encourage bicycling.