

NEW BIKE ROUTES!  
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AASHTO AND ADVENTURE CYCLING ASSOCIATION PRESENT

# AN UPDATE CONCERNING THE U.S. BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM

MARCH 2012

MADE IN THE U.S.A.

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## GETTING IT DONE

### STATES MOVE QUICKLY TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION

**ALASKA** submitted an application to AASHTO at the 2010 fall meeting. The application was approved, pending more information. At the 2011 spring meeting, the committee then approved the numbering for the 4 corridors. *See page 2 for details.*

**ARIZONA** is working with the Coalition of Arizona Bicyclists on routing, outreach, jurisdictional agreements and a plan for signing USBR 66.

**ARKANSAS** formed a work group to lay the ground work for route development, including adding the USBR 51 corridor.

**CALIFORNIA** is developing a strategy for collaborating on route development with CalTrans districts, local agencies, bicycle organizations and other stakeholders.

**CONNECTICUT** is focusing their efforts on development of USBR 1.

**DELAWARE** is focusing on developing USBR 1 in partnership with Maryland, and the East Coast Greenway Alliance.

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA** is working with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Bicycle Committee to develop USBR 1 through the city.

**FLORIDA** passed a state DOT policy and set state USBR criteria in 2011. Work to develop USBR 1 is underway.

**GEORGIA** The GA DOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Office worked with regional planning commissions to update road condition data along the state routes within the USBRS 1 corridor. Some route changes may occur as a result. They are also working on USBR 15.

**IDAHO** is interested in designating routes as a transportation system that supports mobility, economic vitality and tourism potential for communities. They are working on projects that will support USBR development in the near future.

**ILLINOIS** The Route 66 Trail Executive Council is working on designating Route 66 Trail, a combination trail and road route, as a U.S. Bicycle Route.

**INDIANA** is working with Michigan on USBR 35, and coordinating its efforts with the help of the Hoosier Rails-to-Trails Council.

**IOWA** is looking at designating long trail routes that fit into the Corridor Plan. Iowa Bicycle Coalition sees development of a scenic bike-way program as a method implementing other long routes that may one day become USBRs.

**KANSAS** has interest in developing USBRs with momentum behind USBR 66 and 76.

**KENTUCKY** is coordinating with Indiana and Ohio on USBR 25 and is signing and updating USBR 76 to be

in-line with the current TransAmerica Bicycle Trail.

**LOUISIANA** has tapped Baton Rouge Advocates for Safe Streets to document USBR 90 ([www.brsafestreets.org/route-90-in-louisiana-1](http://www.brsafestreets.org/route-90-in-louisiana-1)) and gain buy-in and resolutions of support from the parish and city governments.

**MAINE** USBR 1 was designated in May 2011. *See page 2 for details.*

**MARYLAND** is working with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to develop USBR 1 and will coordinate efforts with Delaware in the near future. They are also involved in USBR 11.

**MASSACHUSETTS** developed a state bicycle plan called the Bay State Greenway which identifies future and existing cross-state routes; some which follow USBR corridors. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Office and Department of Conservation and Recreation identified USBR 1 as their priority route.

**MICHIGAN** designated USBR 20 in May 2011. *See page 2 for details.* MDOT will submit an application for USBR 35, which runs along the Lake Michigan shoreline, in May 2012. A ribbon cutting ceremony and inaugural bike ride is scheduled in Traverse City, MI at the AASHTO Spring Meeting on May 19, 2012.

**MINNESOTA** The DOT is actively working on routing and signing the Mississippi River Trail (MRT) and will be designating the MRT as USBR 45. The next route the DOT will work on is USBR 30 in coordination with Wisconsin.

**MISSISSIPPI** is working with volunteers from Bike Walk Mississippi and will partner with Louisiana on USBR 90 development.

**MISSOURI** The state bicycle and pedestrian office is coordinating efforts with local cyclists and the DOT districts to officially designate and sign USBR 76.

**NEW HAMPSHIRE** USBR 1 was designated in May 2011. *See page 2 for details.*

**NEW MEXICO** is working with the NM Touring Society, with support from the NM Bicycle Coalition to develop USBR 66.

**NEW YORK** will implement USBR 30 with signs and will coordinate efforts with Pennsylvania's state route network.

**NEVADA** is planning USBRs and has reached out to neighboring states to begin determining opportunities for a first route to implement.

**NORTH CAROLINA** USBR 1 was designated in 1982; NCDOT is preparing re-alignment applications for two sections of this route to AASHTO this May. NCDOT is also working to acquire funding to update the state bicycle routes system. The state anticipates having draft plans for this project by end of 2012, but will not begin working on changes and revisions until 2013, this could include additional updates to USBR 1. The map of USBR 1 as well as other state routes are available on the NCDOT website.

**NORTH DAKOTA** had a scope of work drafted for contract; the state DOT is seeking federal funding to proceed.

**OHIO** The state's bike/ped coordinator gained upper management support and is now working on USBR 21 routing with the bicycle and pedestrian planners from the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Regional Planning Commission and the City of Cincinnati.

**OKLAHOMA** is implementing USBR 66 as part of legislation (HB 2049) supporting development of Historic Route 66 Bike Trail.

**OREGON** Cycle Oregon's route coordinator is volunteering his time to Oregon DOT to do route development and community outreach for the state's USBR corridors.

**PENNSYLVANIA** is collaborating with New York to connect with USBR 30.

**RHODE ISLAND** will designate USBR 1 using the East Coast Greenway routing.

**SOUTH DAKOTA** A volunteer from the South Dakota Bicycle Coalition is working on developing draft routes, and is coordinating efforts with the State DOT, local jurisdictions and bicycle and trail stakeholders.

**TENNESSEE** will develop USBR 25 in partnership with KY. Bike Walk TN supporting USBR development efforts, has draft routes (<http://coastdownhills.glogspot.com>) for each corridor.

**UTAH** is working with Bike Utah to prioritize and develop routes.

**VIRGINIA** USBR 1 and 76, designated in 1982, are being updated by VDOT with help from the Virginia Bicycling Federation and the East Coast Greenway. Portions of the routes are signed. *See page 2 for details.* Advocates are also working on developing new corridors.

**WASHINGTON** the Bicycle Alliance of Washington and the DOT are collaborating on outreach and route development for USBR 10.

**WISCONSIN** is implementing USBR 30, which is 80% trail managed by the Dpt. of Natural Resources. The DOT is collaborating with the Bike Federation of Wisconsin on this route and on other route development within the corridor plan.

**WYOMING** is initiating planning for implementation of USBR 76 and 40 and is seeking funding and support to proceed.



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## PUBLIC AWARENESS GROWS

Public interest in the U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is quickly growing. Along with the USBRS webpages – packed with helpful background information ([www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs](http://www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs)), there are weekly updates posted to the Adventure Cycling blog (<http://blog.adventurecycling.org>). Add to that the popularity of the USBRS Facebook page with almost 20,000 fans ([www.facebook.com/usbrs](http://www.facebook.com/usbrs)) and Twitter feeds (@USBicycleRoutes) and it was only a matter of time before the project gained the attention of national transportation leaders. US DOT Secretary Ray LaHood initially blogged about the USBRS in July of 2010 and posted a follow up in June of 2011, reminding Americans that with the U.S. Bicycle Route System, they can use their bikes for recreation and transportation. The Secretary announced the new route approvals by AASHTO for Maine, New Hampshire, Michigan and Alaska (*see page 2 for more details*), saying, "Thirty states are now working on routes to serve as easy-to-ride trunk lines connecting city, regional, and statewide cycling trails. These will provide transportation, tourism, and economic development opportunities across the country."

## GET INVOLVED TO GET IT DONE

As national leaders work on how to fund transportation in the next decade, Adventure Cycling Association continues to offer technical assistance to states involved in developing U.S. Bike Routes. Adventure Cycling is also helping DOTs forge alliances that will foster development of the system. With government budgets strained, staffing and funding are a major concern for transportation agencies at every level. Adventure Cycling is helping agencies find partners in the bicycling and trails community, in natural resource and parks departments, and with cities and local planners, in order to leverage the DOTs resources. Organizations working on behalf of the USBRS and the state DOTs are looking for help. To find out how you can get involved, go to [www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs](http://www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs) and click on "Get Involved" or contact Ginny Sullivan at [gsullivan@adventurecycling.org](mailto:gsullivan@adventurecycling.org)

## NATIONAL SUPPORT IN HOLDING PATTERN

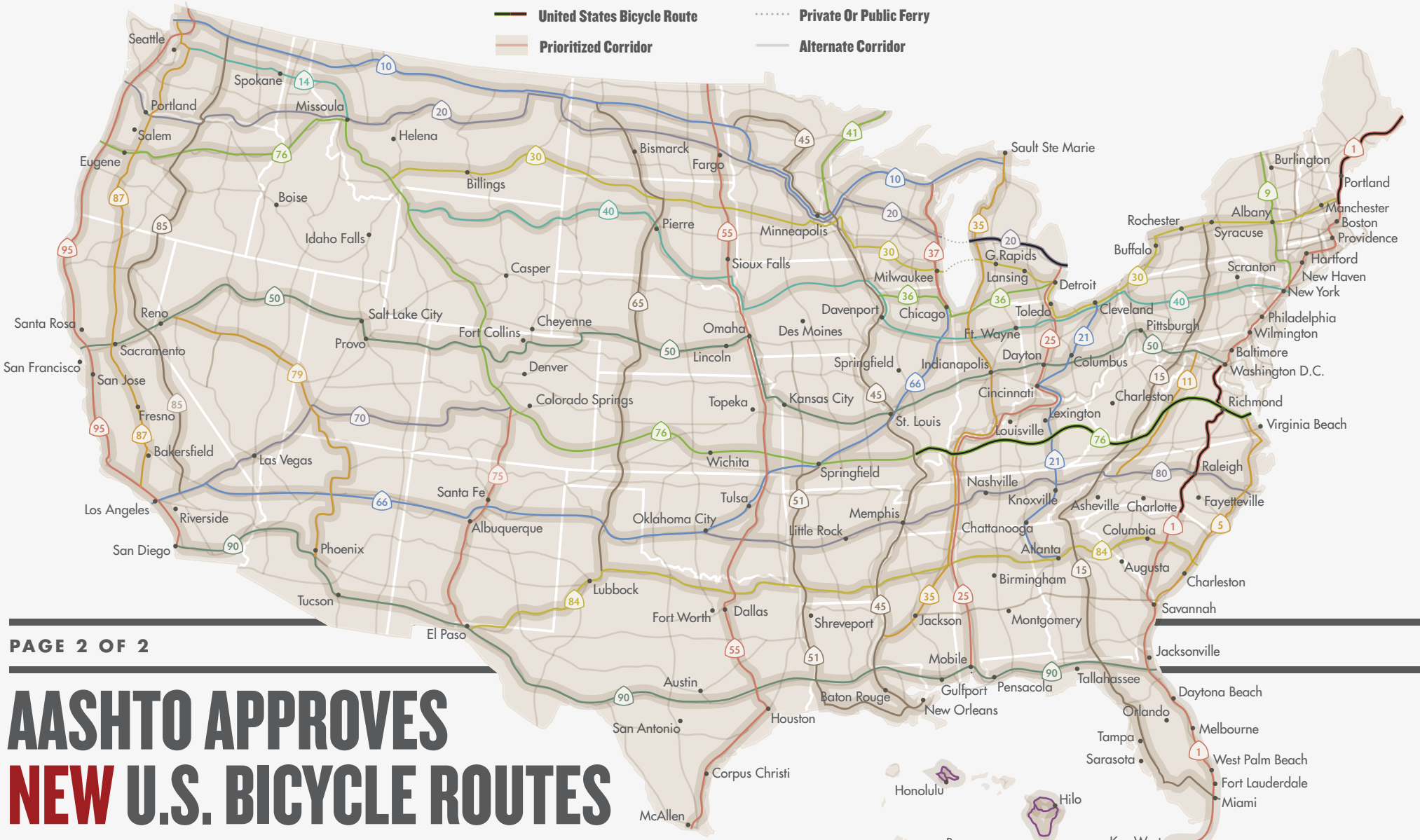
With the extension of current federal transportation law up in the air, transportation agencies continue to do business as usual. The US House and Senate continue to debate their respective versions of a new long-term transportation bill, but one thing is clear: important programs that support cycling facilities, like transportation enhancements, recreational trails, and safe routes to schools, are at serious risk of elimination. However, the USBRS has the support of key officials in Washington, DC, including Congressman Peter DeFazio, a leader on transportation issues, and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. Adventure Cycling and many others will continue to promote federal recognition and investment in planning, signing, and building the USBRS, in partnership with states and local advocates



# CORRIDOR PLAN

This map details the United States Bicycle Route System Corridor Plan, which lays the framework for discussion, planning, and implementation of interstate bicycle routes.

*Prioritized Corridors* are not routes, but 50-mile wide areas where a route may be developed. These corridors have been prioritized and assigned route numbers. *Alternate Corridors* provide additional consideration for interstate routing. Corridors may be added or existing corridors shifted as needed.



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## AASHTO APPROVES NEW U.S. BICYCLE ROUTES

THE FIRST OFFICIAL ROUTES IN ALMOST 30 YEARS

Adventure Cycling Association and the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) announced that AASHTO's Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering has approved six new U.S. Bicycle Routes (USBR): USBR 1 in Maine and New Hampshire, USBR 20 in Michigan, and USBR 8, 95, 97, and 87 in Alaska — the first official U.S. Bicycle Routes to be established since 1982.

"We are pleased that the collaboration with Adventure Cycling has resulted in the approval of these new bicycle routes and we look forward to continuing the implementation of the national corridor plan that was endorsed by AASHTO's membership in partnership with the bicycling community," said John Horsley, AASHTO's Executive Director.

In all four states, tourism and economic development revenue were off-cited goals for communities joining the effort to establish these new routes. Bicycle travel is becoming an increasingly visible part of the adventure travel market, which, according to a recent study issued by the Adventure Travel Trade Association, generates \$89 billion annually. In January 2010, researchers at the University of Wisconsin calculated that out-of-state visitors traveling to Wisconsin for great cycling opportunities generated \$532 million, or more than half-a-billion dollars, in economic activity. With in-state touring cyclists, the total economic impact is close to \$1 billion. Academics and advocates in Minnesota recently issued studies finding a similar \$1 billion economic development boost generated by on-road and off-road cycling. The State of Oregon has embarked on a similar study and expects its survey to come out later in 2011.

The new routes have been under development since AASHTO's Board of Directors approved the national corridor plan for the USBRS — a template for planning interstate bicycle routes across the country — in October 2008.

**MICHIGAN** "The day after AASHTO approved the corridor plan, volunteers contacted our office and asked if they could start developing USBR 20 from Marine City to Ludington," commented Josh DeBruyn, bicycle and pedestrian coordinator for the Michigan Department of Transportation (DOT). "Management supported the idea that this project would be a grassroots effort, and it's worked out tremendously."

In coordination with the Michigan DOT, and working as volunteers for Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, supporters Scott Anderson and Kerry Irons pioneered Michigan's grassroots model for implementing U.S. Bike Routes: first by winning buy-in from local communities and transportation agencies, and then securing route number approval from AASHTO, a required step for all U.S. Bike Routes. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. A powerful voice in the transportation sector, its

primary goal is to foster the development of an integrated national transportation system. AASHTO's support for this project is crucial in earning the support of federal and state agencies, and provides a major boost to bicycling and route development for non-motorized transportation.

Michigan's USBR 20 begins and ends with ferry rides: over 40 miles of Lake Michigan open water from Manitowoc, Wisconsin, to the port of Ludington, Michigan, and three-quarters of a mile across the St. Clair River to Ontario, Canada, from Marine City, Michigan. In between are glacial hills and flat prehistoric lake bottoms of central Michigan. USBR 20 mostly follows quiet, rural, country roads and includes over 45 miles of separated pathways, including the 30-mile Pere Marquette Rail-Trail. The western section of the route features the Manistee National and Pere Marquette State Forests, insuring that cyclists will get a strong dose of "pine tree perfume" as they ride. The route is the essence of small-town, rural communities anxious to host traveling cyclists. Plus, riders get to visit Frankenmuth, ("Michigan's Bavaria") and ride through its covered bridge.

**MAINE & NEW HAMPSHIRE** The Department of Transportation worked with local cyclists to develop U.S. Bike Route 1 from Calais to Portsmouth. "We looked at many options: Adventure Cycling's Atlantic Coast Route and the East Coast Greenway. We came up with what we thought would provide the best touring route while making important connections to Maine's coastal cities and scenic destinations," says Tony Barrett, a dedicated local cyclist active with the Bicycle Coalition of Maine.

Maine's USBR 1 begins on an historic bridge just upriver from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, a symbol of the state's rich maritime history. The route follows low-traffic roads connecting many of Maine's major towns and cities. In Portland, the route follows the Eastern Promontory shore with views of the many islands in Casco Bay. Farther north, USBR 1 follows sections of the state's three major rivers with historic forts and many mills. In Bangor, Maine's second largest city, the route passes by the large statue of Paul Bunyan, a testament to the region's forest products industry along the mighty Penobscot River. (An alternate route, U.S. Bike Route 1A, follows the coast more closely connecting to many harbor towns.) After passing Acadia National Park, USBR 1 continues northeast along the less visited and less-developed "Downeast" coast en-route to the border crossing into New Brunswick. USBR 1 and the coastal alternate are also segments of the East Coast Greenway.

Maine's DOT conducted a series of public meetings to get consensus from local communities about establishing the new route. "Maine

communities recognize the important economic benefits bicycle tourism brings to the state and they welcome travelers, wherever they may hail from," commented Dan Stewart, bicycle and pedestrian program manager for the DOT.

**ALASKA** Starting with the land-based route connecting through Canada, USBR 8 is the Alaskan Highway, which runs from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, via Whitehorse, Yukon, through Delta Junction terminating in Fairbanks. An alternate route from Tok to Anchorage is numbered USBR 108 and the section near Haines is alternate USBR 208. The Alaska Highway is popularly (but unofficially) considered part of the Pan-American Highway, which extends south to Argentina. USBR 95 is the Richardson Highway from Delta Junction to Valdez where the route connects to Washington via the ferry system, also known as the Alaska Marine Highway. A north/south route, USBR 97, runs from Fairbanks through Anchorage to Seward. The Fairbanks to Anchorage section of the route follows the Parks Highway and crosses the entrance to Denali National Park. Another route near Skagway, the home of the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park was approved as USBR 87, which will also connect to Washington via the Alaska Marine Highway. Alaska submitted their original application to AASHTO last fall, however, route numbers for the state had yet to be developed by the Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes. In the weeks leading up to the AASHTO spring meeting, the task force worked with the state of Alaska on the numbering system that was accepted and endorsed by the committee.

"We are excited to be able to promote bicycle tourism in the state of Alaska. We have fabulous vistas and low-traffic highways that beg exploration," says Bob Laurie, transportation planner and bicycle and pedestrian coordinator.

**VIRGINIA** The DOT has been working over the past year to update their U.S. Bicycle Routes, submitting two applications for realignment in the fall of 2010. This spring, they updated sections of USBR 1 and USBR 76, and last week, AASHTO's Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering also approved these realignments.

When complete, the U.S. Bicycle Route System will be the largest official bike route network on the planet, encompassing more than 50,000 miles of routes.



### 10 Fast Facts about the U.S. Bicycle Route System

- 1 The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBR) will one day be a network of officially numbered interstate bicycle routes that connect America's cities, suburbs, and rural areas.
- 2 The Draft Corridor Plan is a corridor-level plan for the development of future U.S. Bicycle Routes.

- 3 Corridors are not routes, but 50-mile wide areas that link key destinations, urban centers, and take into account the natural landscape.
- 4 Corridors can be added, changed, or shifted by states as needed.
- 5 U.S. Bicycle Routes are defined as routes that connect two or more states, a state and an international border, or other U.S. Bicycle Routes.
- 6 U.S. Bicycle Routes may be on roads or trails suitable for bicycle travel.
- 7 State departments of transportation (DOTs) apply for U.S. Bicycle

- Route designation and work in coordination with local agencies and organizations in planning and choosing routes.
- 8 U.S. Bicycle Routes are catalogued and designated by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the lead non-profit organization supporting state DOTs.
- 9 U.S. Bicycle Routes will be designated with numbers and may be signed, and/or mapped.
- 10 Projects to help create U.S. Bicycle Routes can be supported through federal, state and private funds.