

US Task Force on Numbered Bicycle Routes Corridor and Route Criteria for U.S. Bike Route System April 2006; Revised June 2006

It is the aim of the AASHTO Task Force on Numbered Bicycle Routes to encourage the development of a coordinated system of interstate bicycle routes. The Task Force is charged with developing a recommended national systems-level or corridor-level plan for use in designating potential future U.S. bicycle routes. In developing this corridor plan, the task force recognized the need to establish guiding principles for selecting and/or recognizing routes for inclusion.

The Route/Corridor Criteria provide guidance to the Task Force for developing the corridor-level plan. The Specific Route Criteria may be incorporated at a local level as the corridor plan is adopted by state and local agencies and state routes are designated. The criteria are broken down into Primary and Secondary considerations in order to prioritize the criteria.

While the following criteria provide a guide for consistency, they are not intended to supersede state and local agencies' policies on designing cycling facilities nor are they intended to create a uniform approach which might be determined unfeasible, given the expanse and varying terrain and population densities across the U.S. When choosing a corridor/route and the specifics of a given route implementation, the totality of the route must be considered. It may well be that portions of a route do not meet these criteria but that when taken all together, they represent the best choice to achieve the goal of the route.

Corridor Criteria - considerations when choosing corridors

Primary Considerations - Corridors should meet as many of the following as practicable:

1. Meet the planning, design, and operational criteria in the AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities. .
2. Access destinations and regions with high tourism potential, including routes that incorporate important scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational values.
3. Link major metropolitan areas to connect key attractions and transportation nodes.
4. Reasonably direct in connecting cities or attractions.
5. Make natural connections between adjoining states, Canada, and Mexico when possible..
6. Have more or less even distribution north to south, east to west, though route density will need to consider both population density (greater populations may equal higher route densities) and available, suitable roads.
7. Include major existing and planned bike routes, including both on-road facilities and off-road shared use paths and trails that are suitable for road bikes.

Secondary Consideration

8. Offer services and amenities such as restaurants, accommodations, camping, bicycle shops, and convenience/grocery stores at appropriate intervals.

Specific Route Criteria - considerations when choosing roads and trails

Primary Considerations- Specific Routes should meet as many of the following as practicable:

1. Meet the planning, design, and operational criteria in the AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities.
2. Offer services and amenities such as restaurants, accommodations, camping, bicycle shops, and convenience/grocery stores at appropriate intervals.
3. Go into the centers of metropolitan areas, using low-traffic and/or off-road bikeways when possible. Bypass routes could be considered to accommodate users who don't wish to enter the city or who are seeking a less urban experience.
4. Include spurs to target destinations (universities or other educational institutions, recreational areas, or other attractions) and to multimodal nodes such as airports and rail, bus, and transit stations.
5. Follow natural corridors and provide terrain suitable for cycling, avoiding extremely hilly and limited visibility winding roads when feasible.
6. Consider appropriate combinations of low daily traffic, low truck traffic, wide paved shoulders, lane striping, adequate sight distance, and traffic speed in order to be bicycle friendly.
7. In urban areas, be suitable for utility cycling (commuting, access to shopping, schools and universities, recreation centers, etc.). Consideration should be given to bicycle routes that can be used as evacuation routes for emergency situations.
8. Include major existing and planned bike routes, including both on-road facilities and off-road shared use paths and trails that are suitable for road bikes.

Secondary Consideration

9. May include short stretches of high quality unpaved roads if needed to connect highly desirable paved road sections. (These roads should maintain the standard of road bike suitability).