

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS)?

The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a developing national network of bicycle routes, which will link urban, suburban, and rural areas using a variety of appropriate cycling facilities.

State departments of transportation (DOTs) nominate U.S. Bike Routes for numbered designation through the the [American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials'](#) (AASHTO) [Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering](#), which is the same committee that assigns numbers to U.S. highways and interstates.

For a route to receive official designation as a U.S. Bicycle Route, it must connect two or more states, a state and an international border, or other U.S. Bicycle Routes. State or international neighbors must be in agreement with the route and cross-over point.

To learn about designated U.S. Bicycle Routes, visit our [Use a U.S. Bike Route](#) page.

What is AASHTO?

[AASHTO](#) (American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association representing highway and transportation departments in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. It represents the five transportation modes: air, highways, public transportation, rail, and water. Its primary goal is to foster the development, operation, and maintenance of an integrated national transportation system.

What is the Adventure Cycling Association?

Adventure Cycling Association is a national nonprofit organization working to inspire and empower people to travel by bicycle. It is the largest membership cycling organization in North America with [mura]application.members[/mura] members. Learn more about Adventure Cycling and its programs on the [About Us](#) page.

What are the advantages of having a U.S. Bicycle Route System?

The U.S. Bicycle Route System benefits the country by providing an interconnected, national network of cycling routes geared towards medium and long-distance bike travel. The cascading effects of this central benefit are numerous and include:

- [health benefits](#)
- [economic impacts](#)
- [environmental benefits](#)
- [transportation benefits](#)

Is there demand?

Overall, bicycling is booming in the U.S. According to the Bicycle Retailers Association, cycling facilities construction is at an all-time high, and both pedestrian and bicycle facilities have received

an increasing level of support from the public and government in recent years. Better facilities continue to be an important factor in the industry's growth.

- According to the National Sporting Goods Association 95 million adults ride bicycles. U.S. bicyclists have a mean income of about \$60,000 and there are more bicyclists than skiers, golfers, and tennis players combined.
- Adventure Cycling Association has [\[mura\]application.members\[/mura\]](#) members. Over the last 10 years, the organization has seen a 27% growth in membership and a 42% growth in sales of bicycle-touring maps.
- The U.S. bicycle industry has annual sales of \$6 billion and employs roughly 100,000 people selling 16M bicycles per year according to the National Bicycle Dealers Association. Learn more about its [economic impact](#).
- Cycling is the sixth most popular recreational activity in the U.S.
- Other countries that have invested in national systems with success. Visit our [Other Route Networks](#) page.

Who is funding this initiative?

There is no dedicated funding for the U.S. Bicycle Route System at this time, however federal funding mechanisms exist that are appropriate for U.S. Bicycle Routes. The goal of the USBRS is to use existing roads and trails whenever possible, and to build collaborations within states, in order to help keep cost of implementation low.

Are there any existing routes?

Yes, there are routes being established each year. Visit our [Use a U.S. Bike Route](#) page for information about designated routes.

How are routes decided upon?

The AASHTO Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes provides [guidelines](#) (PDF, 18k) and [recommended corridors](#) to assist states in creating their routes. Routes follow existing roads, trails, and highways depending on varying state policies and laws. States are encouraged to develop and follow their own selection criteria in conjunction with input from local bicycle organizations and are welcome to consult with the Adventure Cycling Association. There are [numerous tools available](#) to assist states with this process.

When new facilities are built for U.S. Bicycle Routes, AASHTO recommends that states refer to the [AASHTO Guide for Development of Bicycle Facilities](#).

What is a "corridor"?

Each corridor shown on the [National Corridor Plan](#) is a 50-mile wide area that suggests where a U.S. Bike Route should be developed or where a route may already exist that could be designated. Each corridor usually includes multiple routing options (roads, trails, etc). Corridors link key destinations, urban centers, and scenic routes, and provide a starting-point for state DOTs to plan interstate connections.

On the National Corridor Plan, you can view the corridors and click on each state to jump to a description of that state's implementation status; this map also shows approved and officially designated U.S. Bike Routes as solid dark lines.

Read the [USBRS 101](#) information for details on how the National Corridor Plan was developed.

How is a U.S. Bike Route implemented?

State DOTs coordinate the selection of routes, document them, and apply to AASHTO for designation. DOTs may use contractors, volunteers, and/or private or agency partners to choose routes and document them. [Read more about implementation.](#)

What does designation mean?

Designation signifies that a route is officially recognized with a route number designated by AASHTO.

AASHTO's route numbering process

The [AASHTO Special Committee on Route Numbering](#) implements the AASHTO Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes' [Designation System](#) (PDF/444k) to determine what number will be assigned to the proposed route. The [National Corridor Plan](#) shows the proposed numbering system.

Are there stipulations for developing U.S. Bicycle Routes?

Any state DOT can designate a U.S. Bicycle Route as long as the route travels between two or more states, a state and an international border, or connects other U.S. Bicycle Routes. For example, when designating U.S. Bicycle Route 76, the states of Virginia and Kentucky worked together to align the connection of the route across their common state border. Read more [about implementation.](#)

What if the best route or an important connection is not on a road managed by the State Department of Transportation?

State DOTs work with local jurisdictions (counties, townships, and municipalities) and organizations or agencies to establish routes. Often, the best routes for cycling are outside state DOT jurisdiction. When designating these routes, cooperation is necessary between the DOT, local and state natural resource agencies, and organizations.

States such as Pennsylvania, Georgia, and New York have coordinated efforts between multiple municipalities in their state networks with great success. Their examples have provided a model for the USBRS as have the route networks in other countries. Visit our [Other Route Networks](#) page for more information.

Who oversees and maintains the U.S. Bicycle Route System?

Oversight belongs to the state DOT, however maintenance of a route varies, depending on which roads, streets, or trails used by the route. For example, a route could use a state highway, a county road, and an independent trail, each maintained by a different organization.

We recommend local agreements or resolutions of support identify who will maintain the route.