# Implement a U.S. Bike Route

The U.S. Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is developing through a combination of local, state, and regional efforts, and partnerships between transportation agencies, bicycle and trail organizations, and volunteers. State departments of transportation (DOTs) are responsible for submitting applications for official numbered designation to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Special Committee on U.S. Route Numbering.

"Implementation" is a broad term that defines the process states use to plan, designate, and promote U.S. Bicycle Routes. For a visual overview of the process, download the Implementation of a U.S. Bicycle Route Flow Chart (PDF/128k).

If issues come up during implementation that need clarification, the AASHTO Task Force on U.S. Bicycle Routes can address them.

# Models of Implementation

States implementing U.S. Bike Routes use one of three implementation models:

- State departments of transportation lead the effort.
- Volunteers work with bicycle and/or trail organizations to lead the effort with support from their DOT.
- Committees made up of volunteers, advocates, and agency stakeholders divide up responsibilities.

# Implementation Steps

Implementation of a U.S. Bicycle Route usually unfolds in three phases: planning, designation, promotion.

## Phase I: Planning

The planning phase involves the prelimary work in planning a U.S. Bicycle Route specifically:

- Reviewing guiding documents for developing U.S. Bicycle Routes.
- Determining your team, stakeholders, and responsibilities.
- Determining goals and choosing which corridor to implement.
- Establishing a timeline and team communications.

## Phase II: Designation

"Designation" requires that a route be defined, and approved, by all jurisdictions (counties, cities, state agencies and other road and trail owners). The state DOT must approve the route as suitable for bicycling, and then submit the proposed route to AASHTO for official designation, which involves numbering the route and cataloguing it in the AASHTO database.

The designation phase involves:

- Determining how the route will be defined and evaluated.
- Drafting the route.
- Securing local agreements through resolutions of support.
- Documenting the route.
- Filling out and submitting the AASHTO application.

### Phase III: Promotion

Once a route is official, states enter the promotion phase and should promote their routes.

AASHTO requires state DOTs map their U.S. Bicycle Routes, and these maps may be offered online and/or as printed bicycle maps. The routes could also be shown on state or county road maps. States may also provide downloadable GPS waypoints and may choose to share the KML files with Google maps.

Though not required by AASHTO, providing wayfinding for the route is highly encouraged. Road agencies, along with their public or private partners, purchase and place route markers and signs on U.S. Bicycle Routes. Over time, state and local road authorities, trail managers, and public or private partners may provide maintenance and up-grades on the roads, trails, and signs that make up the routes.

## Funding Information

There is no dedicated funding for the U.S. Bicycle Route System at this time, however states may access funding for roadway and trail improvements through the Recreational Trails and Transportation Alternatives programs as well as through the Highway Safety Improvement Program.

While implementing U.S. Bicycle Routes, the goal is to use existing roads and trails whenever possible and to build collaborations that keep the cost of implementation minimal.

State DOTs might consider partnering with private groups or use bicycle organizations and/or clubs to help fund specific projects, place signs, and manage the routes. Local officials, organizations, and individuals eager to have U.S. Bicycle Routes in their community may also be willing to help fund maps or signs, and may volunteer services, such as outreach to local agencies, gaining agency approvals, turn-by-turn documentation, sign placement or maintenance.

Community grants and Bikes Belong grants might be suitable funding sources.