

ADVENTURE CYCLING ASSOCIATION'S ROUTE PHILOSOPHY:

Rural back roads are generally chosen over wider, more highly engineered roads which carry large amounts of traffic (even if the latter has wide shoulders). It is occasionally a somewhat arbitrary judgment call, for we do sometimes use highly engineered roads. In reality, however, rare is the occasion when we have to choose one type over the other; there are usually good reasons for having made the choice we did.

Using gravel/dirt/unpaved roads is avoided on our touring routes, unless there is no other option. It should be the minimum amount of unpaved road possible.

Where available, separated paths, such as rail-trail conversions and urban pedestrian/bicycle paths, are occasionally incorporated into our routes. But we rarely change the course of a route simply to take advantage of separated paths. They tend to be isolated and often times do not feed into other good cycling byways. Furthermore, we believe in advocating that bicyclists and motorists share the roads.

ROUTE SELECTION CRITERIA:

Not all of the following are always possible; in fact, some may seem contradictory. A route is chosen using the best combination of criteria possible. Again, this sometimes demands judgment calls by office or field personnel. (The reality is that, in a multi-hundred mile route, we end up using a little of almost every kind of road there is.)

- 1.) The new route should connect into the Adventure Cycling Route Network.
- 2.) The route should be designed to follow "corridors of attraction," i.e., scenery, cultural/historic points of interest, varieties of geography, terrain, and inhabitants.
- 3.) Our routes should try to retain a rural nature whenever possible. Where convenient, the route should pass near, but generally not through, large centers of population. There are exceptions to this, of course, when major population centers offer various historic and/or cultural opportunities that might enrich the cycling experience. Spurs from the main route into cities can give the cyclist a choice if they want to partake of a city's services.
- 4.) Where convenient, routes can incorporate existing paved rail-trails and urban pedestrian/bike paths.
- 5.) Services should be available at least every 40 to 60 miles, or an average day's ride apart. In certain less-populated areas, this criterion cannot be met, but in such cases the route should be chosen with the least amount of distance between services as possible.

6.) The route should be as direct as possible, after fulfilling points one through five above.

Objective criteria are listed below, but are generally considered secondary in importance to the above points.

- 1.) The selected roads should carry fewer than 1,000 vehicles per 24 hours.
- 2.) Smooth paved roads and shoulders with good bituminous surface are preferred.
- 3.) The optimal road width is 24' wide (two 12'-wide lanes), with 2' to 4' of paved shoulders on each side. In reality, however, the sort of rural roads we seek out are rarely of this high standard. If they were, they'd probably carry too much traffic for our liking.
- 4.) Roads with 2"+ drops between the traffic lane and shoulder should be avoided.
- 5.) Visibility is important - we try to avoid extremely hilly and winding roads which have higher traffic counts.
- 6.) Length and percentages of grades on hills are secondary factors.
- 7.) Whenever possible, we try to avoid roads which carry a high number of trucks and commercial traffic. Again, in certain areas, the road we choose might be the only paved road available, so we have to use it.