

Everyone is a pedestrian sometime. No matter how long or how short, every trip begins and ends with a walk. It is one of the peculiar twists of modern life that many people will get in their car and drive ten, or twenty miles to visit a gym, hike a trail or ride a bike with their friends for simple exercise.

Recreational bicycle use in West Virginia is increasing constantly. However, bicycling for transportation is limited, primarily due to the rugged terrain, and the rural nature of the state. The distances some of us travel to get to work or reach a store eliminates bicycling and walking as viable transportation choices for some of us. The real and perceived dangers of walking and cycling discourage others from using these alternatives.

Organizations such as the League of American Bicyclists led early efforts to improve road conditions. The automobile quickly changed the reason for smooth pavement from the bicyclist to the motorist. This sudden change prevented bicyclists and motorists from developing a system for coexistence. American drivers largely consider bicycles to be a toy rather than a means of transportation.

This attitude is slowly changing due to the cost of gasoline, urban congestion, the recent upswing in the number of adult bicycle riders, and the environmental impacts of automobiles. As governmental transportation officials, we cannot ignore the segment of society that, due to various circumstances, is dependent upon bicycles and walking for their daily transportation needs.

Today motorists must share the road with pedestrians, bicyclists, equestrians, horse drawn buggies, and other groups with special needs. This plan is the West Virginia Division of Highways' (WVDOH) attempt to accommodate all of these users on the state's roadways. In fact, the Division wants to do more than just accommodate these users; we want to invite them to use the roads in a safe and effective manner.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the West Virginia Division of Highways Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator is to improve accommodations on the State's roadway system for bicycles, pedestrians and other non-motorized users and function as a point of contact for inquire and comment on bicycle and pedestrian issues.

PURPOSE OF PLAN

Through this plan WVDOH will continually improve conditions on the State's roadway system for bicycles and pedestrians. Safely and effectively accommodating bicycles and pedestrians will improve the roadway system by increasing the transportation choices available for citizens and visitors,

reducing congestion, reducing the demand for automobile parking spaces, reducing the individuals cost for transportation and will benefit of citizens and visitors by providing a healthier transportation choice.

This plan is intended to advance bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on the State's transportation system and integrate it with other transportation systems by:

- developing new and upgrading existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities,
- providing information to citizens on bicycle and pedestrian facilities,
- providing standards for planning and designing bicycle and pedestrian facilities,
- explaining the laws relating to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and
- providing access to Federal and West Virginia laws, rules, regulations and policies on bicycle and pedestrian issues,
- developing proposals to improve bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

ORGANIZATION OF PLAN

This plan is organized in sections with a specific goal for each section. These goals are listed below.

- Adopt bicycle and pedestrian friendly laws practices and policies.*
- Improve access to an improved network of bicycle transportation facilities.*
- Promote safe bicycling through education and enforcement.*
- Improve pedestrian access to the roadway system.*
- Suggest funding for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.*

This plan has identified numerous recommendations to aid in achieving these goals. Some of these recommendations are listed below.

Request amendments to the WV State Code.

Request revisions to the WVDOH Design Directive - 811, Curb Ramps and Sidewalks, and Design Directive – 813, Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation.

Initiate a policy to pave shoulders five feet or greater in width as bicycle lanes with appropriate signage and pavement markings.

Initiate a policy to improve the shoulders of paved and unpaved roads used as long distance hiking trail connections during routine maintenance.

Initiate a policy to improve roads designated as bicycle routes during routine maintenance and resurfacing.

Initiate a policy of sponsoring periodic training on AASHTO and FHWA design guidelines for bicycle and pedestrian facilities for WVDOH employees.

Initiate a policy on designating bicycle routes in coordination with adjoining states.

Depict these routes on a map of the state's roadway system and a web-based interactive map.

Initiate a policy of WVDOH facilities providing one bicycle parking "space" for every fifty employees or prospective users.

Notify all potential sponsors of the need for bicycle parking and the possibility of funding through the grant programs.

Initiate a program to reduce motor vehicle accidents with bicycles and pedestrians in intersections, during periods of reduced visibility and during the summer months.

Initiate a policy of analyzing motor vehicle accidents involving bicycles or pedestrians using the Bicycle Pedestrian Crash Analysis Tool (BPCAT).

Initiate a policy of requests for "Share the Road" signs being submitted through the WVDOH Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator for review and comments to be forwarded to the appropriate WVDOH District

Inventory the "Share the Road" signs on WVDOH right of way.

Promote safe walking and riding by reminding pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists of the need to share the road with each other through a multi-media campaign.

Initiate a "WV BIKE SAFETY" program for citizens to contact the Bicycle/Pedestrian Coordinator concerning unsafe conditions for review and referral to the appropriate person to address the problem.

Initiate funding support for a yearly statewide meeting of bicycle and pedestrian advocates.

Request stricter and more aggressive enforcement of the laws concerning bicycles and pedestrians.

Request initiation of "Fix-it Tickets" for bicycle equipment offences.

Request training in bicycle safety for law enforcement officers.

Request law enforcement officers actively support helmet use.

Request Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) and WVDOH Districts to identify pedestrian facilities built by the WVDOH and review to determine if they are still fulfilling their needs

Request MPOs and institutions of higher education identify pedestrian facilities they desire on WVDOT right of way.

Request roadways with long-distance trails along them receive special attention during maintenance activities.

Discussion of these goals and recommendations can be found in the complete "West Virginia Division of Highways Plan for the Accommodation of Bicycles and Pedestrians".