

## **FHWA/FTA Interim Technical Guidance for Bike/Ped Planning at the State and MPO Levels**

This Interim Guidance covers planning for bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways regardless of facility type ranging from on-road treatments to separate off-road facilities. A one day training course, "Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Under ISTEA," (course number 15135) is available to expand upon this guidance upon request to FHWA's National Highway Institute.

**Bike/Ped Transportation Planning** - explains bike/ped provisions of the legislation

**Bike/Ped Considerations in a Transportation Plan:** - describes how to include a bike/ped element into the overall transportation plan

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Planning**

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#### **Introduction:**

Sections 1024 and 1025 of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) require that States and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) develop transportation plans and Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) which consider and include, as appropriate, bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs. These plans and TIPs will be used to define transportation projects and programs for Federal transportation funding at State and metropolitan levels.

#### **Purpose:**

This document offers technical guidance on meeting the requirements for consideration and appropriate inclusion of bicycle and pedestrian elements in Statewide and MPO transportation plans and TIPs.

#### **Federal Transportation Policy:**

It is Federal transportation policy to promote the increased use and safety of bicycling and walking as transportation modes.

#### **Specific Legislative Requirements:**

Specifically, Section 1024 of the ISTEA, "Metropolitan Planning," amends Section 134 of Title 23, United States Code (U.S.C.) as follows:

*... metropolitan planning organizations, in cooperation with the State, shall develop transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas of the State. Such plans and programs shall provide for the development of transportation facilities (including pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) which will function as an intermodal transportation system for the State, the metropolitan areas, and the Nation.*

Similarly, Section 1025 of the ISTEA, "Statewide Planning," amends Section 135 of Title 23 U.S.C. as follows:

*Subject to section 134 of this title, the State shall develop transportation plans and programs for all areas of the State. Such plans and programs shall provide for the development of transportation facilities (including pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) which will function as an intermodal State transportation system.*

In addition, in Section 1025 of the ISTEA, 23 U.S.C. §135 is amended to read:

*Each State shall undertake a continuous transportation planning process which shall, at a minimum, consider the following:*

*(3) Strategies for incorporating bicycle transportation facilities and pedestrian walkways in projects where appropriate throughout the State.*

Final regulations implementing the State and MPO requirements for transportation plans and programs were published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 1993, by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) as 23 CFR Part 450. 23 CFR 450.214, "Statewide transportation plan," states that the Statewide transportation plan shall:

*(3) Contain, as an element, a plan for bicycle transportation, pedestrian walkways and trails which is appropriately interconnected with other modes;*

23 CFR 450.216, "Statewide transportation improvement program (STIP)," states:

*In addition the STIP shall: (6) Contain all capital and non-capital transportation projects (including transportation enhancements, Federal lands highway projects, trails projects, pedestrian walkways, and bicycle transportation facilities), or identified phases of transportation projects ...*

23 CFR 450.322, "Metropolitan transportation planning process: Transportation plan," states:

*In addition the plan shall: (2) Identify adopted congestion management strategies including, as appropriate, traffic operations, ridesharing, pedestrian and bicycle facilities ... and (3) Identify pedestrian walkway and bicycle transportation facilities in accordance with 23 U.S.C. 217 (g).*

23 CFR 450.324, "Transportation Improvement Program: General," states:

*(f) The TIP shall include: (1) All transportation projects, or identified phases of a project, (including pedestrian walkways, bicycle transportation facilities and transportation enhancement projects) within the metropolitan area proposed for funding under title 23, U.S.C., ....*

**Note:**

These items are presented as specific references to bicycling and walking in the metropolitan and statewide planning requirements of the ISTEA. All other provisions of the ISTEA and the final regulations issued on October 28, 1993, by the FHWA and the FTA also apply as appropriate to the bicycle and pedestrian elements of State and MPO plans and TIPs.

**Deadlines:**

The final regulations published in the *Federal Register* on October 28, 1993, by the FHWA and the FTA require that the statewide transportation plans must be completed by January 1, 1995. The MPO Plans for nonattainment areas requiring Transportation Control Measures were due on October 1, 1994, and all other metropolitan areas shall comply by December 18, 1994.

**Scope:**

The inclusion of the bicycle and pedestrian elements in transportation plans and programs may be accomplished by addressing bicycle and pedestrian issues throughout the transportation planning process and integrating bicycle and pedestrian elements as appropriate in the transportation plan and programs. A separate section on bicycle and pedestrian specific issues in addition to or in place of an integrated element may be appropriate. This approach would address the ISTEA mandate of developing transportation facilities that will function as an intermodal transportation system.

The bicycle and pedestrian plan elements should contain policy statements and goals as well as, whenever possible, the inclusion of specific projects and programs. The plan and the TIP should identify the financial resources necessary to implement the bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs.

Bicycle and pedestrian projects may be on- or off-road facilities. For off-road trails, all such facilities that serve a transportation function must be consistent with the planning process.

A trail serves a valid transportation purpose if it serves as a connection between origins and destinations. Trails funded through programs requiring FHWA or FTA approval, except for the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA), are determined to serve primarily a transportation purpose. These must be included in statewide and MPO plans.

For Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs), if a bicycle or pedestrian project is determined to be regionally significant (as defined in the Planning Rule) and is funded by or requires an action by the FHWA or the FTA, it must be included. If it is funded using other Federal or non-Federal funding, it should be included for informational purposes. Projects can be grouped in STIPs.

For Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs), if a bicycle or pedestrian project is determined to be regionally significant (as defined in the Planning Rule) and is funded by or requires approval of the FHWA or the FTA, it must be included. In air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas, if it is funded using other Federal or non-Federal funding, it shall be included for informational purposes. Projects can be grouped in TIPs.

A trail serving a recreational purpose with no transportation function is a recreational trail. For example, a closed loop trail within a park or recreation area would be a recreational trail.

Similarly, a linear facility serving only recreational users would be a recreational trail. Any trails funded through the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA) are determined to be primarily recreational in nature and are intended to enhance the recreational opportunity and resources of the park or recreation area. The NRTFA planning requirements are met in each State's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Except as noted below, projects funded under the NRTFA are not required to be on statewide or metropolitan plans or TIPs. However, their inclusion is recommended.

It is essential to coordinate the statewide and metropolitan transportation plans with the SCORP document with regards to trail policies and plans. Also, it is essential to coordinate recreational trail projects with the STIPs and TIPs. This coordination will help protect the continuity of existing and proposed trail and greenway corridors.

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Considerations in a Transportation Planning Process:**

The bicycle and pedestrian element of transportation plans should include:

1. **Vision and Goal Statements, and Performance Criteria: The vision statements express concisely what the plan is expected to accomplish. For example:**

- The vision of this program is a nation of travellers with new opportunities to walk or ride a bicycle as part of their everyday life. The vision of this program is the creation of a changed transportation system that offers not only choices among travel modes for specific trips, but more importantly presents these options in a way that they are real choices that meet the needs of individuals and society as a whole.

The goals to reach the vision, and the time frame for reaching each goal should be spelled out. They should be clear and objectively measurable. For example, some goals would be:

- To double the percentage of trips taken by bicycling and walking for all transportation purposes, and to reduce by 10 percent the number of bicyclist injuries and fatalities by the year 2000.
- To increase the number of bicyclists and pedestrians or to increase facility mileage by a certain amount by a given year.
- To improve the connections among bicycle, pedestrian, and transit systems.
- To allow people to bicycle safely, conveniently, and pleasurably within five miles of their homes, and to make streets and roads "bicycle friendly" and well-designed to accommodate both motorized and nonmotorized modes of transportation.

Network performance criteria also should be developed. Some applicable criteria would be accessibility, directness, continuity, route attractiveness, low numbers of conflicts with other route users, number of bicycle links with transit, cost, ease of implementation, etc.

Specific State and MPO goals and performance criteria should be developed to support locally determined bicycle and pedestrian program implementation efforts.

2. **Assessment of Current Conditions and Needs:**

A baseline of information should be collected on which to base strategies and actions necessary to reach the vision and goal statements. The information collected in this step should determine the extent to which the existing transportation system meets the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. The Intermodal Management System should provide information on existing and needed bicycle and pedestrian access to major intermodal transportation terminals such as commuter rail stations. Specifically, this assessment could include:

- Determination of current levels of use for bicycling and walking transportation trips, and current numbers of injuries and fatalities involving bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Evaluation of the existing transportation infrastructure (including on- and off-road facilities) to determine current conditions and capacities and to identify gaps or deficiencies in terms of accommodating potential and existing bicycle and pedestrian travel.
- Determination of the capacities and the type and security level of bicycle parking offered at intermodal connections such as transit facilities and destination points.
- Identification of desired travel corridors for bicycle and pedestrian trips.
- Examination of existing land use and zoning, and the patterns of land use in the community.
- Planning, design standards, and agency policies and the extent to which they affect the accessibility of the transportation system for bicyclists and pedestrians, e.g., do they meet policies and design guidance issued by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for bicycle and pedestrian facilities?
- State and local laws and regulations affecting the vision and goals, e.g., growth management and trip reduction laws, or constitutional restraints on expending highway funds on bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- Availability of bike-on-bus or bike-on-rail access; including hours service is available, routes where available, and incentives and barriers to using the service (i.e., training, permit, or additional charges required).

3. **Identification of activities required to meet the vision and goals developed above. These activities or strategies could include:**

- Basis of the need for modifications to the transportation system through surveys, origin destination studies, public input, or other data collection techniques.
- Needed modifications to the existing transportation system of on- and off-road facilities to meet the vision and goal statements.
- Development and application of criteria to prioritize and to identify specific facility-related improvements.
- Identification of changes required to planning, design standards, and agency policies.
- Specification of education, encouragement, and law enforcement components to support facility development.
- Identification of nonconstruction activities such as mapping, parking facilities, etc., that are needed to reach the vision and goals developed above.
- Investigation of the effects on bicyclist and pedestrian safety.
- The relationship of statewide, MPO, and local plans for bicyclists and pedestrians, i.e., ensuring that such plans are coordinated among the involved jurisdictions.

- The consideration, as appropriate, of the 23 statewide transportation planning factors and the 15 metropolitan planning process factors in the development of bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs.
- The inclusion of recreational bicycling and walking facilities such as recreational trails is encouraged, but not required. Nevertheless, the coordination of transportation and recreational bicycle and pedestrian facilities and programs is essential.
- Provide a mechanism for evaluating the performance of the transportation system containing implemented projects against the performance of the original system.

4. **Implementation of the bicycle and pedestrian elements in the statewide and MPO transportation plans and transportation improvement programs:**

Inclusion in the Plans: The bicycle and pedestrian elements as a set of policy statements and/or a list of projects will be included in statewide and metropolitan transportation plans and will be updated appropriately as statewide and MPO plans are updated.

Inclusion in the TIPs: The bicycle and pedestrian element of the transportation plan should be implemented by including identified projects in the TIP in accordance with priorities established by MPOs, States, and transit operators, and in accordance with 23 CFR Part 450, sections 216 and 324.

5. **Evaluation of progress:** Using the performance measures developed previously, regularly determine progress in reaching the identified vision and goals. Appropriate changes to either the vision and goals or to the strategies and proposed projects should be made.
6. **Public Involvement:** As required by the ISTEA and the FHWA/FTA joint planning regulations published on October 28, 1993, public involvement is essential in the development of transportation plans and programs including the bicycle and pedestrian components. Public involvement should include, to the extent possible, input from individuals who will be affected by the transportation plan and programs. This involvement must meet the requirements for statewide planning spelled out in the regulations in 23 CFR Section 450.212, and those for MPO planning spelled out in 23 CFR Section 450.316(b). Any subsequent policy statements and guidance provided by the FHWA and FTA also needs to be considered.

The regulations require that State departments of transportation and MPOs have public involvement processes which are followed in preparing transportation plans and programs. Bicycle and pedestrian groups should be aware of the opportunity to participate in the development of these public involvement processes and to comment on them before they are adopted. This is in addition to the opportunity to participate according to the public involvement processes in the development of transportation plans and programs. Public involvement will occur at key decision points as described in the public involvement procedures for the planning process.

7. **Transportation Conformity Requirements for Air Quality:** Per 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93, bicycle and pedestrian facilities are exempt from transportation conformity requirements. Their inclusion as part of a larger project that does not meet the conformity requirements could result in delay while the requirements for the larger project are satisfied. Trails funded through the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRTFA) that may have an air quality impact in air quality nonattainment areas must be analyzed to determine if they conform with the State Implementation Plan (SIP). Such projects must be included in the transportation plan and TIP. To be eligible for Federal funding or

approval, such projects must come from a conforming plan and TIP and may not cause or contribute to a new or existing violation of the air quality standards. In air quality nonattainment areas only projects from a conforming TIP shall be included on the STIP.

The following kinds of projects are determined to have no significant air quality impact: Projects funded under the following paragraphs of Section 1302(e)(1) of the ISTEA: (A), (B), and (E); (F) except for facilities that may cause air quality impacts such as parking facilities; and (C), (D), and (G - K) for nonmotorized trails.

The following kinds of projects must be analyzed for air quality impact:

All motorized recreational trail projects in nonattainment areas

Provision of parking facilities.