United States Bicycle Route System
History of US Bicycle Routes

In 1970’s interest in long distance bicycle travel proliferates.
History of US Bicycle Routes

• In 1978 AASHTO establishes US Bicycle Routes
  • Purpose & Policy
  • Highway System approach
First US Bicycle Routes designated in 1982
But no routes designated since
United States Bicycle Route System

The Task Force was charged by the Standing Committee on Highways with developing a recommended national corridor-level plan for use in designating potential future US bicycle routes.
Develop a corridor plan for a network of bicycle routes that connects states on regional and national levels, spurs the development of new routes, and creates alternative transportation options.

Work with State DOTs and other agencies through AASHTO to assist and encourage development and adoption of these routes.

Educate the public on a national and local level, with the potential of increased bicycle mode share for transportation and recreation.
Task Force Members

• **Task Force Chair**
  – Richard Moeur, Arizona

• **Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering**
  – Wes Dean, Mississippi
  – Barry Warhoftig, West Virginia
  – Ed Fischer, Oregon
  – Tim Crouch, Iowa

• **Technical Committee on Geometric Design**
  – Ken Briggs, Maryland
  – David Hutchison, Springfield, Missouri
**Task Force Members**

- **Technical Committee on Nonmotorized Transportation**
  - Tom Dodds, South Carolina
  - David Bachman, Pennsylvania
- **Federal Highway Administration**
  - Christopher Douwes, National Trails Enhancement Program
  - Gabe Rousseau, FHWA Pedestrian and Bicycle Coordinator
- **Bicycle Route Organizations**
  - Ginny Sullivan, Adventure Cycling Association
  - Karen Votava, East Coast Greenway Alliance
  - Terry Eastin, Mississippi River Trail
Other National Organizations Supporting the USBRS

The Education Foundation of America

The Lazar Foundation

American Trails

Bikes Belong

Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center

League of American Bicyclists

U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration

THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR BICYCLING & WALKING

bikewalk.org

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Putting More People On Bicycles More Often
PHASE 1

- Collect, compile and review information on existing and proposed multi-state bicycle routes. In 2005, the Task Force collected the data, formalized it into a multilayer spreadsheet, mapped the data and wrote a report of the findings.

www.adventurecycling.org/usbrsinventoryreport
Phase 1 - Collection of data on existing or proposed State, Regional, and Local Routes
PHASE 2

Develop recommended corridors to comprise a logical national system, called the U.S. Bicycle Corridor Plan. Corridors demonstrate an area (+/- 50 mile radius) where a route should exist.

Produce a map of the draft U.S. Bicycle Corridor Plan.

www.adventurecycling.org/corridorplanmap
Phase 2 – Corridor Criteria

• Identify:
  – Continuous routes
  – Routes of regional & national significance
  – Historic transportation corridors
  – Popular regional / national cycling routes

• Connect:
  – Population centers
  – Primary destinations
  – Scenic corridors

www.adventurecycling.org/corridorplancriteria
Inventory of routes overlaid by the proposed corridor system
Corridors in relation to Major U.S. Metropolitan Areas and National Parks

Corridors are defined as “desire lines” that link urban-rural communities, attractions and recreational areas in a network. Roads or trails chosen for these corridors should be within 50 miles (+/-) of the recommended corridor. Defining the corridor is the first step to defining a bicycle route and focuses on the overall direction and natural landscape features.
PHASE 3

• Develop a logical system of designations for U.S. bicycle routes and assign appropriate designations to each corridor. Designations will comprise of a number, name, letter or combination system that will accommodate future expansion of the system.
The Power of Designation

• *The street or route name changes, but the designation goes on and on...*

• *With a consistent route designation, travelers can follow a route*
  – Across town
  – Across the state
  – Across the country!
Proposed Route Designations

• **Five different proposals developed:**
  – 2 digit (similar to US highways) with some 1 digit (historical)
  – 1 digit (for X-country) & low 2-digit
  – Single letter (alphabetical)
  – Name/Abbreviation (of route name)
  – Letter / number combination
U.S. Bicycle Routes Corridor Plan
Draft Designation v.1 - Dec. 2007

East - West Corridors are even numbers
North - South Corridors are odd numbers
All numbers are two digits
Possible expansion to three digit for urban spurs
Historic Rational: AASHTO designation for Routes 1 and 76
U.S. Bicycle Routes Corridor Plan
Draft Designation v.2 - Dec. 2007

East - West Corridors are even numbers
North - South Corridors are odd numbers
Numbers range from single to double digits to allow for potential growth of USBRS
Possible expansion to three digit for urban spurs
U.S. Bicycle Routes Corridor Plan
Draft Designation v.3 - Dec. 2007

East - West Corridors are A through N
North - South Corridors are O through Z
Possible expansion to letter/number combinations
U.S. Bicycle Routes Corridor Plan
Draft Designation v.4 - Dec. 2007

Named system
TA - Aca TransAmerica Bicycle Trail
MRT - Mississippi River Trail
ECG - East Coast Greenway
ANT - Aca Northern Tier
AST - Aca Southern Tier
GLL - Great Lakes Loop
UGR - Aca Underground Railroad Route
NT - Natchez Trace
U.S. Bicycle Routes Corridor Plan
Draft Designation v.5 - Jan. 2008

East - West Corridors are even numbers
North - South Corridors are odd numbers
M routes are border to border
A routes are longer routes, but not border to border
B routes are intermediate routes, not linking
C routes are shorter, connector routes
D routes are spurs into larger cities
U.S. Bicycle Routes Designation System

Draft - 2008

North-south routes have odd numbers, with numbers increasing from east to west
East-west routes have even numbers, with numbers increasing from north to south
Yellow corridors are undesignated connectors

Historic Rational: AASHTO designation for Routes 1 and 76
Next Steps

• Approval by AASHTO - summer/fall 2008
  - Webinars hosted by FHWA for State DOTs
  - Subcommittee on Traffic Engineering
  - Technical Committee on Geometric Design
    - Subcommittee on Design
    - Technical Committee on Nonmotorized Transportation (state B/P coordinators)
    - Standing Committee on Highways
    - AASHTO Executive Board
Implementation

• State & local agencies determine best route along each corridor
  – Local organizations can help
• Route applications submitted to AASHTO by State DOTs
• Installation of signs & trailblazing
• Expansion of the system
  – Spur & loop routes
  – New routes & corridors
US Bicycle Routes Web Site:

www.adventurecycling.org/usbrs
The results will be more transportation options, more people cycling, better health for Americans, and a cleaner environment.