Environmental Handbook

Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation

This handbook outlines the process steps necessary to comply with both the U.S. Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation and the Texas Department of Transportation’s policy for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
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1.0 Introduction

This handbook outlines the process steps necessary to comply with the U. S. Department of Transportation Policy Statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodation Regulations and Recommendations dated March 11, 2010 along with the Texas Department of Transportation's policy for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) if a Federal approval is needed for an environmental document. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is responsible for ensuring compliance on state funded and delegated federally funded projects.

The federal policy statement emphasizes an increased commitment to develop and invest in bicycle and walking infrastructure to help meet goals for cleaner air and healthier environments that reduce roadway congestion and contribute to the development of more livable, safe, and cost-efficient communities. USDOT policy is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects.

1.1 TxDOT Policy

It is TxDOT’s policy to proactively plan, design, and construct facilities to safely accommodate bicyclists and pedestrians. Consideration and discussion of bicycle and pedestrian facilities shall be accomplished as part of the project scoping and environmental planning processes.

1.2 Responsible Party

Project sponsors (which may or may not include TxDOT) are responsible for incorporating bicycle and pedestrian accommodations into their transportation projects (if applicable) and documenting their decision making processes in the project’s environmental documents.

The department delegate (TxDOT) is responsible for the review and approval of transportation project proposals for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations for state and delegated federal projects. It is also responsible for the submittal of other federal project proposals with accommodations, or without accommodations, to FHWA for review and approval.

1.3 Applicable Project Types

All transportation projects are required to address pedestrian and bicycle accommodations within the project limits.

1.4 Critical Sequencing

Bicycle and pedestrian accommodations shall be considered and discussed as the purpose and need of a transportation project is defined during the NEPA process, taking into consideration existing and anticipated bicycle and pedestrian facility systems and needs.

1.5 Additional Resources

- Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines, July 26, 2011 (PROWAG)
- Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS)
- Texas Administrative Code 16 TAC 68.102
2.0 Regulatory Overview

To ensure that bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are addressed during transportation project planning, project sponsors shall document the bicycle and pedestrian accommodations incorporated into the project or provide documentation explaining why bicycle and pedestrian facilities will not be included in the proposed project.

3.0 Procedural Requirements

Step One – Evaluate existing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations and travel patterns within the project limits for compliance with USDOT and TxDOT policy. Evaluate cross streets as well as the project corridor.

Step Two – Evaluate existing pedestrian facilities within the project limits for compliance with American with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), Texas Accessibility Standards (TAS), and Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG).

Step Three – Determine if additional bicycle and pedestrian accommodations are needed to comply with ADAAG, TAS, PROWAG, and USDOT and TxDOT policy.

Step Four – Include needed accommodations and determine if supplemental facilities will also be included.

Step Five – Document the results of the planning process, either in a statement explaining how pedestrian and bicycle accommodations were incorporated into the project or in a statement justifying the non-inclusion of the accommodations.

4.0 Project Scoping and Planning

Federal Regulations call for the planning for bicyclists and pedestrians as an integral part of the ongoing transportation planning process. Project recommendations and programs identified in the planning process should be implemented. Specifically, due consideration should be given to them in plans developed by each metropolitan planning organization and by the State in conjunction with all new construction and reconstruction and in transportation plans and projects for safety and contiguous routes.
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Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are to be incorporated when the transportation project is scoped. If bicycle and/or pedestrian accommodations are recommended in an approved planning document, the sponsor should include them in the project plans.

Existing sidewalks located within the right of way (ROW) should be evaluated for conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, PROWAG, and TAS. Existing sidewalks within the ROW that do not meet ADAAG, PROWAG, and TAS requirements should be upgraded to meet these standards. Roadway intersections, crosswalks, and shared use path crossings should also be evaluated for ADA compliance and general pedestrian and cyclist accessibility. ADA compliant ramps should be provided at all cross streets as needed.

5.0 Requirement Triggers

Transportation projects are required to address pedestrian and bicycle accommodations within their project limits.

5.1 Urban Projects

For all urbanized settings, regardless of the type of transportation improvement, the following guidance is provided:

- For construction projects within existing ROW and when the scope of work is limited to within the roadway typical section, the project plans should:
  - Remove barriers to accommodate pedestrians according to TAS/ADAAG/PROWAG and TxDOT’s Pedestrian Facilities (PED) standard sheets, and;
  - Accommodate for bicyclists by restriping the existing roadway typical section to provide a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use when practical.

- For construction projects within existing ROW and when the scope of work involves pavement widening, the project plans should:
  - Accommodate bicyclists by widening the pavement to either provide at least a 14-foot wide curb lane for shared use or a 5-foot wide (minimum) bicycle lane;
  - Include necessary work to ensure all existing ADA curb ramps comply with current standards; and
  - Reconstruct or add sidewalks and crosswalks to ensure a continuous ADA compliant pedestrian route.

- For full reconstruction or new construction projects, where new ROW is acquired, the project plans should provide the desired roadway, bicycle and sidewalk geometric values shown in the RDM, AASHTO Bike Guide and TAS/ADAAG/PROWAG for each facility type.

- On new construction projects, and where practical on reconstruction projects, which construct a raised median, a 6-foot median width should be provided for pedestrian refuge in accordance with the PROWAG.
5.2 Rural Projects

For projects in a rural setting, the following guidance is provided:

For off-system roadways greater than 400 Average Daily Traffic (ADT) and all on-system roadways where bridges are being replaced or bridge decks are being replaced or rehabilitated, a 5-foot shoulder (4-foot shoulder and 1-foot barrier offset) shall be provided on the structure and along the adjacent barrier.

6.0 Usable Lane Width

- The usable lane width for shared use by motorized vehicles and bicyclists in a wide curb lane is 14 feet and is measured from the center of the edge stripe to the center of the lane stripe or from the longitudinal joint of the gutter pan to the center of the lane stripe (the gutter pan should not be included as a usable width).
- The curb offset is not included as part of the usable lane width for a shared use in a wide curb lane.
- When restriping or widening existing pavement to achieve a wide curb lane for shared use, the appropriate lane widths for the remaining lanes and curb offsets as defined in the RDM should be maintained.
- The usable lane width for a designated bike lane is 5 feet wide and is measured from the center of the lane stripe of the outer most traffic lane to the face of curb or barrier (if applicable).
- The dimensions described above for a wide curb lane or a bicycle lane are minimum values. Where traffic volumes or speeds are high, wider lanes for bicycles may be needed.

7.0 Public Involvement and Coordination with Resources Agencies

In the consideration of pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, public input (when applicable) as well as bicycle and pedestrian accommodation plans produced by city, county, and metropolitan planning organizations shall be considered. Local bicycle and pedestrian interest groups can also be contacted for public input.

If questions arise about applicability of bicycle accommodations, the State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator or FHWA’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator may be consulted.

8.0 Documents Requirements

Include a discussion of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in each environmental document. If the project does not include pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, provide written justification as to why such accommodations were not included. The written justification shall be under a separate heading entitled “Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations” and as part of the “Existing Facility,” “Proposed Action,” and “Alternatives” sections, where appropriate.

9.0 Review and Approval Process

The Environmental Affairs Division of TxDOT, with input from the Design Division, reviews TxDOT’s environmental documents for both state and federal transportation projects.
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The Environmental Affairs Division, along with the Design Division, determines whether appropriate consideration and accommodation has been made for bicyclists and pedestrians on state projects and delegated federal projects.

FHWA and TxDOT review and approve TxDOT’s National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents for federal projects, determining in the process whether appropriate consideration and accommodation has been made for bicyclists and pedestrians.

10.0 Glossary

**Urban Setting** – The project setting is either on an urban classification roadway, on a rural classification roadway within city/county limits where there is an urban feel, or within city/county limits where there is a linkage to a transit system or transportation corridor.

**Rural Setting** – The project setting is on a rural classification roadway that does not have an “urban feel” and/or is not linked to a transit system or transportation corridor.

**Off-System** – Off-system means a roadway facility or bridge that is controlled and maintained by a county or city. Off-system facilities include county roads, and city streets.

**On-System** – On-system means a roadway that is controlled and maintained by TxDOT, including, but not limited to, Farm to Market Roads, State Highways, US Highways, and the Interstate Highway system.

11.0 Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **AASHTO** American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
- **ADA** Americans with Disabilities Act
- **ADAAG** Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines
- **ADT** Average Daily Traffic
- **FHWA** Federal Highway Administration
- **MPO** Metropolitan Planning Organization
- **NEPA** National Environmental Policy Act
- **PROWAG** Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines
- **RDM** Roadway Design Manual
- **ROW** Right of Way
- **TAS** Texas Accessibility Standards
- **TAC** Texas Administrative Code
- **TxDOT** Texas Department of Transportation
Appendix A

The following table shows the revision history for this guidance document.

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<tr>
<th>Effective Date</th>
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