

The MnDOT Bicycle Law Advisory Task Force

Minnesota bicycle rules and some statutes have not been updated since the 1970s. These outdated rules and statutes have resulted in administrative ambiguity and impeded the incorporation of best practices into bikeway design and bicycle facility policy. In the spring of 2015, MnDOT convened a Bicycle Law Advisory Task Force of leaders from state and local government, advocacy organizations, the University of Minnesota, and professional associations to provide recommendations on how to modernize state statutes and rules regarding bicycle facilities on trunk highways using the following guiding principles:¹

- ***Flexibility and fairness:*** the fair application of standards that leave room to develop practical, common sense solutions
- ***Safety in infrastructure:*** laws and rules that create a safer network of bike facilities, trails, and roadways
- ***Define, clarify, and update agency roles:*** eliminate outdated statutes or rules, create clear lines of understanding between state agencies, enhance access to data and information
- ***Relationships between all users:*** balance all modes of transportation to maximize safety and create bike laws that work for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists
- ***Safety in operations:*** a system that encourages safety by maintaining reasonable speeds, discouraging distracted biking, and bridging rural and urban perceptions of safety

The task force's work resulted in the creation of proposed legislation to be presented to the legislature during the 2016 legislative session, as well as recommendations regarding the repeal of administrative rules and changes to the MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual. The task force's recommendations can be summarized in three points:

1. ***Put forward proposed legislation*** — The task force developed legislation that will clarify agency roles and responsibilities, giving the MnDOT Commissioner clear authority to plan, design, establish, and maintain bikeways within the right-of-way of state trunk highways. In addition to updating and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the MnDOT Commissioner, the legislative proposal also updates the statutory language to reflect the current MnDOT practice for designing bikeway facilities. The current bikeway design process mirrors the process for roadway design. Roadway design and bikeway facility design follow concurrent practices which allow for design flexibility on a case-by-case basis based on criteria and standards detailed in the MnDOT Road Design Manual which includes the MnDOT Bikeway Facility Design Manual
2. ***Repeal MnDOT bicycle rules*** — Bicycle rules will be moved to MnDOT's Bikeway Facility Design Manual or incorporated into enabling legislation.
3. ***Enhance the Bikeway Facility Design Manual*** — Incorporate relevant existing administrative rules into the facility design manual as they are repealed and update manual to reflect current national best practices.

Management Analysis & Development (MAD) facilitated this task force.

¹ The scope was limited to a review of what is under the authority of the MnDOT Commissioner, specifically related to the Trunk Highway System. State aid rules were specifically outside the scope of this task force.