

# City of Fort Smith, Arkansas

## Bikeway Plan

**Purpose:** To develop a safe, efficient, and economical comprehensive bicycle facilities plan for the City of Fort Smith which will become a specific element of the City's Master Street Plan and will be implemented through the appropriate City codes and ordinances.

**Authority:** The City's authority to develop, adopt, and enforce a bicycle facilities plan is found in Acts 1957, No. 186, which is the municipal planning enabling legislation for the State of Arkansas.

**Jurisdiction:** The bicycle facilities plan's effective jurisdiction is within the Fort Smith City Limits. Upon amendments to the City's Subdivision Regulations which will regard bicycle facilities plan implementation techniques, the effective jurisdiction of the bicycle facilities plan will be the Planning Jurisdiction Area of the City of Fort Smith.

# **Fort Smith Bicycle Plan**

## **Section I Goals and Objectives:**

### Goals:

1. To incorporate bicycle design and construction considerations in all street reconstruction and new construction projects.
2. To provide for the public's interest, safety, and general welfare by encouraging and offering a well planned, safe, and efficient bikeway system that will interconnect neighborhoods and provide access to both neighborhood and city-wide destinations.
3. To ensure the safety of the bicyclist and motorist alike by initiating a broad based bicycle educational program in the Fort Smith Public School system and the parochial and private schools within the City.

### Objectives:

1. Require all new street reconstruction or new construction to accommodate bicycle usage by providing the appropriate bicycle facility type as defined by the Fort Smith Bikeway Plan.
2. Develop design and construction specifications for bikeways that are safe and compatible with the City's streets based on the following criteria:
  - a. Street function, ie: arterial, collector...
  - b. Existing and projected vehicular traffic volumes.
  - c. Posted speeds on the City's streets.
3. Develop a comprehensive bikeway plan for the City that not only addresses individual neighborhood needs such as access to schools, parks, commercial centers, and churches; but also recognizes the greater need to interconnect the City's neighborhoods and provides access to employment centers, the central business district and other downtown destinations, and Westark College.
4. Provide public bicycle facilities such as; long term and short term parking, lock ups, and park and ride locations in association with the Fort Smith Transit System.
5. In concert with the Fort Smith Police Department, the Fort Smith Public School System, the City's parochial private schools, and the City's media community initiate a bicycle educational/public awareness program for City bicyclists that incorporates the following principles:

- a. The Arkansas Vehicle Code
  - b. Bicycle operational training
  - c. Equipment requirements
6. Prepare a Fort Smith Bicyclist's Manual with the assistance of local bike groups, commercial bicycle sales and repair businesses, and the State Highway and Transportation Department. At a minimum, the Manual will address the four general principles of bike safety:\*
- a. Maintain control of your bicycle
  - b. Ride with traffic
  - c. Be visible and ride alert
  - d. Protect yourself

\*These principles were developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation and utilized in the Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

## **Section II Fort Smith General Policies Regarding The Bicycle Plan:**

- A. Bicycle transportation is an integral part of the overall transportation plan for the City and will be provided the same consideration for implementation as any element of the Fort Smith Master Street Plan.
- B. The Fort Smith Bikeway Plan will be implemented through the enforcement of the City's Master Street Plan, Subdivision Regulations, and other development codes and ordinances. Where necessary, the City will develop amendments to existing regulations and ordinances to facilitate the orderly implementation of the Bikeway Plan.
- C. Bicycle transportation improvements are essential elements of the City's capital improvements programming process and will be afforded the same considerations as other transportation improvements which utilize the City's sales tax receipts for construction.
- D. The City of Fort Smith considers the Bikeway Plan an important element of the Master Street Plan. Elements of the Master Street Plan are also contained in the Bi-State Transportation Study's Year 2025 Transportation Plan which is the official regional transportation plan required by the Federal Highway Administration. The City will request that the Bikeway element of the Master Street Plan be incorporated into the Bi-State Year 2025 Transportation Plan and afforded any and all of the same considerations for federal financial assistance as any other proposal in the Bi-State Year 2025 Transportation Plan.

- E. The City of Fort Smith will work with State and Federal transportation and economic development agencies to secure possible grant and other categorical funds appropriate for the Bikeway Plan implementation.

### **Section III Bikeway Plan Structure and Format**

1. Bicycles are allowed on all Fort Smith City Streets with the exception of Interstate 540 which is subject to the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department Commission's Minute Order 64-144 that prohibits the use of Interstates and other controlled access highway by pedestrians and bicycles.

2. There are four (4) types of bikeway facilities.. They are as follows:

Class I. This is a bikeway that is physically separated from the motorized vehicular traffic along a transportation corridor. Class I bikeways can either be within the road right-of-way or on their own separate public right-of-way. They are two (2) directional and thus need to be designed accordingly. (Section IV presents the design and construction specifications for each of the four (4) bikeway facilities.)

Class II. This is a bikeway that is a physical part of the existing road surface. It is striped for exclusive use for bicycles. These bikeways are found on most arterial roads and significant collector streets. Class II bikeway facilities are one directional and always in the same direction as the motorized vehicular traffic. Arterial roads or collector streets that contain Class II bikeway facilities must have them in both directions thus providing two-way directional bicycle travel within the pavement portion of the road or street.

Class III. This is a bikeway that can be either a paved shoulder separated by a stripe on the pavement from the vehicular lanes or an extended curbside vehicular lane width when physical limitation of the existing road surface prohibit a bicycle lane or shoulder bikeway. In both cases, automobile parking may be allowed on the same side as the bikeway. Neither of these two types of Class III bikeways are striped.

Class IV. These bikeways comprise the balance of the Fort Smith bicycle plan network. In keeping with the policy of the City of Fort Smith, any City street or thoroughfare that has not been designated as a Class I, II, or III bikeway facility or that does not expressly prohibit bicycles such as Interstate Highways and controlled access

highways, are designated as Class IV bikeways. Class IV bikeways are often referred to as “shared” bikeway facilities and require no striping of the vehicular travel lanes. However, when circumstances such as traffic volumes, physical impedances, or speeds will pose a safety hazard to the bicyclists or the motorists, bicycle lane markings or other techniques may be used to ensure safe operations for both users.

3. The justification for the predominant use of Class IV Bikeway facilities is based on the following three (3) points:
  - a. The physical surface for the bikeway is already in place and will be maintained in accordance with the existing street maintenance program.
  - b. The existing road and street network is continuous and comprehensive and provides access to the vast majority of destinations in the City.
  - c. Both the motorists and the bicyclists must adhere to the “rules of the road” as established by Arkansas Statutes and enforced by the Fort Smith Police Department. Conformance to these “rules” increases the prospects for safe operations.

#### **Section IV Design Specifications**

The following design and construction standards are presented by Class of Bikeway, Class I - Class IV, and are in accordance with the Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (ASHTO). These standards are approved and endorsed by the Federal Highway Administration and the Arkansas State Highway and Transportation Department.

##### Design Considerations:

- A. Where a road or street is being constructed or reconstructed, any and all gravel or otherwise unpaved driveway or alley approach should be paved back to a distance of 15 feet to prevent loose gravel or other materials from encroaching into the travel lane/bike lane.
- B. Where parallel parking is permitted, a bike lane must be located between the parking space and the travel lane and have a minimum width of 5 feet.
- C. Where a bike lane is planned for a one-way street, it should be located on the right side of the street. In cases where vehicular conflicts or other safety issues may arise, a bike lane may be allowed on the left side only until it is feasible to bring it back to the right side of the street.
- D. Bikeways may not be placed on existing or planned sidewalks. Pedestrian conflicts should be avoided except where the bicycle facility has been designed

for such dual use. Class I bikeway facilities are the only bikeways that may provide for pedestrian and bicycle joint useage.

- E. Two-way bikeways are not allowed except in the case of Class I bikeway facilities which have, relative to width, been properly designed to accommodate two-way bicycle traffic.
  
- F. Angle/diagonal parking should be avoided when future planning bikeway locations. Existing angular parking areas should be studied to identify the impacts of changing this style of parking to parallel parking.

### **Recommended Design and Construction Standards and Specifications**

The City of Fort Smith adopted, in toto, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Bikeway Facilities specifications contained in their report Guide for the Development of Bicycles Facilities published in August 1991. A copy of these specifications will be made a part of the recommended plan.

These specifications can be accessed through the City of Portland, Oregon and the Oregon Department of Transportation at the following website:

[www.trans.ci.portland.or.us/Traffic Management/Bicycle Program/BikeM.../appendal.ht](http://www.trans.ci.portland.or.us/Traffic Management/Bicycle Program/BikeM.../appendal.ht)

### **Section V Maintenance Program**

The Maintenance program portion of the Bikeway Facilities Plan will be conducted by the Fort Smith Street Department in concert with their regularly scheduled street maintenance activities.

### **Section VI Educational Program**

The educational program of the Bikeways Facilities Plan will be developed jointly by the following:

- Fort Smith Police Department
- Fort Smith Parks Commission
- Western Arkansas Planning & Development District
- Fort Smith Public Schools Administration
- Representatives from the parochial and private schools of Fort smith

