

# Biking by Route Number

by Jack Freidenrich

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has set up the nation's first U.S. numbered bicycle routes. Although AASHTO has been responsible for approving or altering the numbering system of U.S. highways, since 1926, the Association has not previously numbered bicycle routes.

Meeting June 28-29, in Portsmouth, N.H., AASHTO's Route Numbering Committee and Executive Committee established the country's first two officially recognized bicycle routes—one extending north and south through Virginia and North Carolina (Bicycle Route 1) and another stretching east and west through Virginia, Kentucky and Illinois (Bicycle Route 76). The AASHTO Policy Committee set the groundwork for establishing these bike routes at its 1979 Annual Meeting in Hartford, Conn. when it unanimously adopted the U.S. Numbered Bicycle Route Purpose and Policy. The States

were then asked to identify routes for inclusion in a U.S. system.

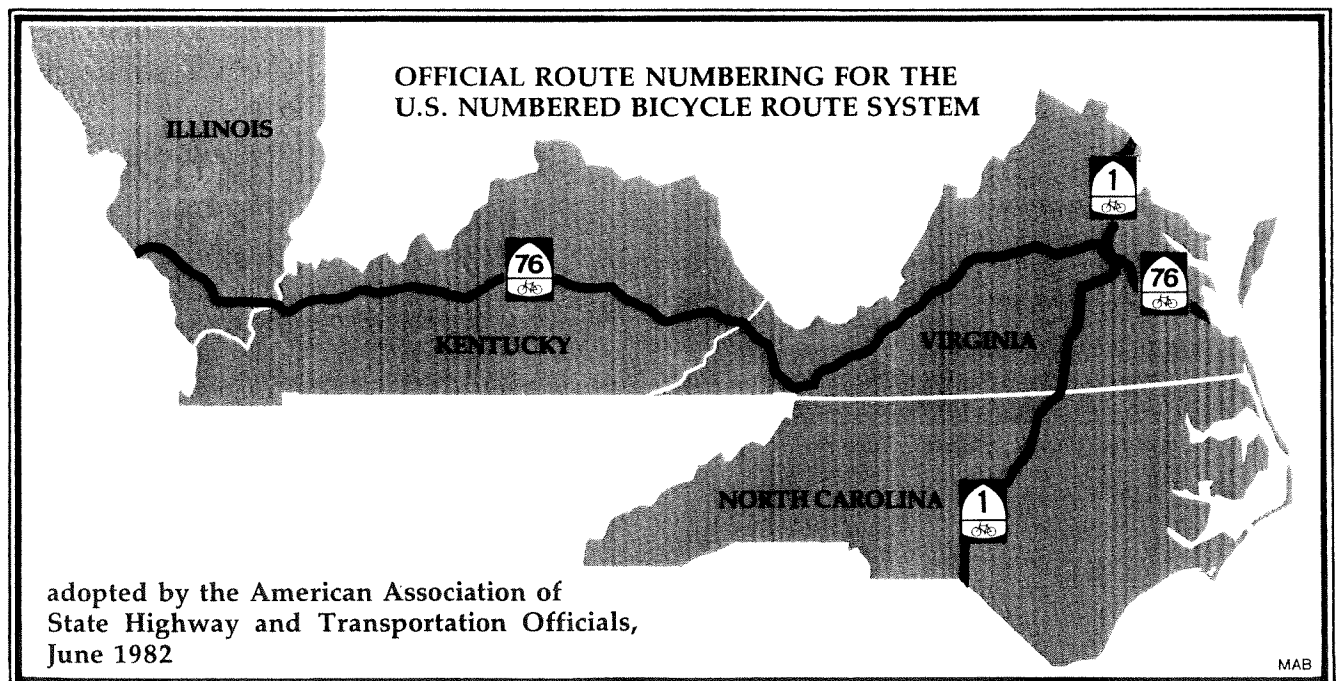
Meetings were held with representatives of the bicycling community to review the routes which had been submitted and discuss other issues involved in establishing the system. These meetings proved invaluable. In particular, the efforts of Ralph Hirsch and Ed Hon-ton, League of American Wheelmen; Katie Moran, Bicycle Federation; Bill Wilkinson, Bicycle Manufacturers Association; Bruce Burgess, Bicycle Touring Group and Josh Lehman, Seattle Department of Engineering are acknowledged.

While several States have examined bicycle routes to be included in a national system, only the two mentioned above have been formally approved. Twice a year, the AASHTO Route Numbering Committee will consider additional applications from State departments of highways and transportation to add to or change routes for highways or bikeways between two or more States.

Other organizations have identified bike routes across the country, but, in some cases, without the approval of the State departments of highways and transportation. State officials feel AASHTO should be responsible for numbering bicycle routes since the organization already assigns numbers to the U.S. highway and Interstate systems.

Revisions to the AASHTO policy for establishing U.S. numbered bicycle routes were approved by the AASHTO Policy Committee on June 30, 1982. The revised policy gives States the flexibility to map and/or install signs along bike routes. AASHTO will maintain a general map of the numbered bike routes, and bicyclists may write each State for more detailed routing information. ↩

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# Purpose and Policy

## U.S. Numbered Bicycle Routes

Adopted October 14, 1979,  
Revised June 30, 1982

### Purpose

The purpose of the U.S. bicycle route numbering and marking system is to facilitate travel between the states over routes which have been identified as being more suitable than others for cycling.

### Definition

A bicycle route is any road, street, path or way which in some manner is specifically designated as being open to bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.

### Policies

1. The Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials shall have full authority to review the U.S. numbered bicycle route system and the numbering and marking thereof, to make additions, changes, extensions, revisions or reductions in said route system and to revise the numbering or marking thereof.
2. Before approving any addition, change, extension, revision or reduction in the U.S. numbered bicycle route system, or the numbering or marking of any U.S. numbered bicycle route, the Executive Committee shall consult the State Highway or Transportation Department of the State or States through or within which such addition, change, extension, revision or reduction is located.
3. The State Highway or Transportation Department, by a favorable vote on the adoption of this purpose and policy, agrees and pledges its good faith that it will not erect U.S. markers on any route without the authorization, consent or approval of the Executive Committee of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, notwithstanding the fact that the changes proposed are entirely within that State.
4. No U.S. numbered bicycle route shall be designated that does not extend between two or more States and is mapped and/or appropriately marked along its length.
5. The bicycle route marker included in the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* is recommended for use to all travel map makers, also for use by the State Highway and Transportation Departments.
6. Any proposal that would exploit the prestige of the U.S. numbered bicycle route system, especially when it appears to be for the purpose of benefiting businesses located along such a proposed route, shall constitute reason for denying any application to make such an addition to the system.



7. Since the U.S. numbered system was established by joint action of the State Highway or Transportation Departments, only those applications for change in or addition to the U.S. numbered system from the Member State Highway or Transportation Department involved shall be considered by the Executive Committee. Those local officials, organizations, groups, or individuals interested in a change or in an addition to the system should contact their State Highway or Transportation Department and not the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall consider only those applications from State Highway or Transportation Departments that are filed on the official form and are complete in all detail to the degree that the Executive Committee can evaluate the need for an adequacy of the proposed route from the application form submitted and without a representative of the State Highway or Transportation Department appearing before the Committee to supply additional information.
8. No person or group of persons shall be allowed to appear either before the Executive Committee or its Route Numbering Subcommittee except in the case of a State Highway or Transportation Department requesting reconsideration of an action by the Executive Committee in regard to an application filed by that Department.
9. In case a proposed change or addition to the U.S. numbered bicycle route system involves two or more States, the proposal shall be given official consideration only when all affected State Highway or Transportation Departments have filed applications to cover the complete proposal.
10. No route should be considered for inclusion in the U.S. numbered system that does not substantially meet the current AASHTO design standards contained in the AASHTO Guide for Development of new Bicycle Facilities. 