

## **Bicycling Routes on Provincial Roads Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

To support bicycling in Nova Scotia, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) may designate some portions of provincial roads as bicycling routes.

### **Rationale**

The Department is committed to supporting Active Transportation (AT), including bicycling on provincial roads. Bicycles are permitted to operate on all roads unless otherwise prohibited by regulation<sup>1</sup> or a sign.

Some roads are designated as “bicycling routes” to provide wayfinding assistance. Designating bicycling routes also helps to provide a consistent and positive bicycling experience.

The purpose of this policy is to provide directives and guidance in determining which portions of the provincial road network can be designated as a bicycling route.

### **Policy Objectives**

To provide direction in determining when, and how, portions of a provincial road can be designated as a bicycling route.

### **Definitions**

For the purposes of the Bicycling Routes on Provincial Roads Policy, the following definitions apply.

**Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT):** The number of vehicles passing the count location in a 24-hour period, averaged on the basis of one year. The AADT for provincial roads is determined by TIR’s Traffic Engineering and Road Safety section.

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<sup>1</sup> Motor Vehicle Act s.88 and s.89 and Public Highways Act s.20

**Active Transportation (AT):** Any form of human-powered transportation including, but not limited to, walking and bicycling.

**Active Transportation Coordinator (ATC):** A TIR employee responsible for coordinating active transportation initiatives.

**Blue Route:** A designated provincial bicycling network, which will connect communities while recognizing regional differences, needs and opportunities. The location is determined by the Blue Route Team.

**Blue Route Team:** A committee of representatives from identified organizations that are responsible for the management of the Blue Route project. This group is identified in the Blue Route Team Terms of Reference (see Appendix A).

**Bicycling Route:** Bicycling routes should be continuous, and may be a combination of many types of bicycle facilities, including trails, pathways, designated bicycling facilities, or roads. They may have no visible bicycling facilities or infrastructure, such as pavement markings or signs. These routes may be found in bicycle tour books, on local maps and on web sites.

**Designated Bicycling Route:** A designated route for bicycling on a provincial road that meets the criteria outlined in this policy. These routes will be marked with signs that are intended to guide bicyclists onto or along particular roadways or paths between a starting location and an ending location.

**Paved Shoulders:** The area to the right of the travel lane, between the white painted line and the edge of pavement. When wide enough to accommodate a cyclist, paved shoulders provide a separate space for AT use. They are not designated or marked as a bicycle lane.

**Provincial Roads:** Roads owned and maintained by TIR, as defined by the Public Highways Act.

**Trans Canada Trail (TCT):** The TCT is managed by a non-profit organization. The trail itself is a Canada wide network of recreational trails. When connected, the TCT will stretch 23,000 km from the Atlantic to the Pacific to the Arctic Oceans. It is multi-use and depending on the section, is used by hikers, bicyclists, horseback riders, cross country skiers and

snowmobilers. The sections referenced in this policy would be road links, intended for bicyclists.

## **Application**

This policy applies to those responsible for approving and signing a bicycling route on a provincial road including, but not limited to, the Chief Engineer, Area Managers, District Traffic Supervisors, and the Active Transportation Coordinator.

## **Accountability**

**Chief Engineer (CE):** Responsible for approving proposed Blue Route locations on provincial roads.

**Area Managers (AM):** Responsible for receiving applications for proposed bicycling routes, conducting site visits, assessing the route's physical characteristics, seeking input from the Active Transportation Coordinator, and approving or rejecting bicycling routes proposed by municipal units.

**District Traffic Supervisors (DTS):** Responsible for advising the AM on the route and the requirements for Share the Road signage.

**Active Transportation Coordinator (ATC):** Responsible for assessing the proposed routes for their integration into provincial and other Municipal bicycling plans, participating on the Blue Route Team, reviewing and updating this policy.

## **Monitoring**

District Directors and Director of Highway Engineering Services are responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.

The ATC will review and update this policy, with feedback from District staff and stakeholders, as conditions warrant.

## **Directives**

### **1.1 Designation of Bicycle Routes**

#### **1.1.1 Designation of a Bicycling Route**

TIR will review all municipal requests for designation of bicycling routes on provincial roads. Municipalities requesting this designation must identify if the proposed route is part of an AT plan, bicycling plan, or equivalent, and that the plan has been approved by Municipal Council.

#### **1.1.2 Designation of the Blue Route**

The Blue Route is a provincial bicycling route, agreed upon by the Blue Route Team, in consultation with municipalities, local interest groups, local trails groups, etc. The Blue Route must at a minimum meet the criteria of a designated bicycling route on provincial roads as indicated in this policy (see Directive 1.2). Additional criteria is established by the Blue Route Team. TIR has final approval regarding whether the Blue Route may be on a provincial road

#### **1.1.3 Designation of the Trans Canada Trail as a Bicycling Route**

Designation of any section of the Trans Canada Trail as a bicycling route will be done so in accordance with this policy.

### **1.2 Minimum Criteria for Bicycle Routes**

Directive 1.2.1 applies to all bicycling route designations. Directives 1.2.2 and 1.2.3 do not apply to Blue Route designations.

1.2.1 Sections of road to be designated as a bicycling route must meet the same shoulder width criteria that is shown in the Standard Drawing S-2011-200 *Paved Shoulder Width for Active Transportation*, as per *Policy PO1063 Shoulder widths for Active Transportation Policy*, for repaving work.

1.2.2 Bicycle routes (other than the Blue Route) will not be designated on roads with speed limits in excess of 80 km/h. Speed zone reductions will not be considered solely for the purposes of designating a bicycling route.

1.2.3 Bicycle routes (other than the Blue Route or Trans Canada Trail) must have an active transportation connection within the community, or provide a continuous recreational riding experience. It must meet **at least one** of the criteria below:

- Have important or recognizable starting and ending locations (origins and destinations);
- Complete a recreational riding loop from a recognizable origin;
- Provide a road link between two sections of multipurpose trail;
- Be known to be a route already appealing to bicyclists. This can be determined by (but not limited to) discussions with local bicycling groups, touring companies, heat maps, etc.

### **1.3 Approval Process for Designated Bicycling Routes other than the Blue Route or Trans Canada Trail**

- 1.3.1 The Department will only consider requests for a designated bicycling route from municipalities. Requests from individuals will not be considered. Requests shall be submitted to the AM.
- 1.3.2 Notwithstanding 1.3.1, TIR will also select and designate bicycling routes on Provincial Roads should it determine a need.
- 1.3.3 The AM must conduct a site visit and assess the proposed route, and complete the AM portions of the Bicycling Route Assessment Tool “Assessment Tool” (See Appendix B).
- 1.3.4 The AM will forward the bicycling route request to the Active Transportation Coordinator (ATC), with the completed AM sections of the Assessment Tool. The proposed routes will then be evaluated by the ATC, and other Highway Programs staff as necessary, to ensure compliance with the *S-2011-200 Paved Shoulder Width for Active Transportation* as per *Policy PO1063 Shoulder widths for Active Transportation Policy*. The ATC will also evaluate the proposed routes with respect to other bicycling initiatives to ensure there is no conflict or duplication of efforts.
- 1.3.5 The ATC must complete the ATC portions of the Bicycling Route Assessment Tool. The ATC will then provide a recommendation to the AM.
- 1.3.6 The AM will approve or reject the bicycling route proposal.

- 1.3.7 If approved, the AM will request that the DTS investigate the proposed location for placement of the “Share the Road” sign assembly in accordance with policy PO1024 “*Share the Road*” Sign Assembly, *Application Guide for Provincial Highways*.
- 1.3.8 If rejected, the AM will advise the ATC of any circumstances that have necessitated the rejection of a proposed bicycling route.
- 1.3.9 When a road section is approved as a designated bicycling route, bicycling route signage shall be applied as per the *Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Canada* and the *Bikeway Traffic Control Guidelines for Canada*.

#### **1.4 Approval Process for the Blue Route**

- 1.4.1 The location of the Blue Route, on provincially owned land, is determined by the Blue Route Team. Once determined, sections of the Blue Route that are located on provincial roads, are forwarded to CE, with a recommendation that they be designated Blue Route.
- 1.4.2 Upon receiving a recommendation, the CE will either:
- Approve the section(s) for designation if they meet the criteria outlined in Directive 1.2.
  - Conditionally approve the section(s) for designation if they are acceptable but do not meet the criteria outlined in Directive 1.2.
  - Reject the proposed sections.
- 1.4.3 After approval or conditional approval, sections of the Proposed Blue Route that require upgrading will be noted in TIR’s Capital Program, for addition of paved shoulders when the section is scheduled for repaving or reconstruction.
- 1.4.4 When an approved Blue Route road section meets the criteria in Directive 1.2 or is conditionally approved under the Special Circumstances, the ATC will recommend to the AM that Blue Route Signage be erected on the section.
- 1.4.5 TIR will install and maintain the required Blue Route Signs on provincial roads.

- 1.4.6 Upon receiving this request, the AM will request that the DTS investigate the proposed location for placement of the “Share the Road” sign assembly in accordance with policy PO1024 “*Share the Road*” Sign Assembly, *Application Guide for Provincial Highways*.
- 1.4.7 Any requests for changes or additions to the proposed Blue Route location can be made to the Blue Route Team, via Bicycle Nova Scotia. These changes or additions can be suggested by bicycling clubs, trails groups, or a municipality.
- 1.4.8 The route change or addition will be assessed by the Blue Route Team and, if acceptable, the ATC will make a recommendation to CE to either approve or conditionally approve, subject to Directive 1.4.3, a section or sections of provincial highway to be designated as Blue Route.

## **1.5 Approval Process for the Trans Canada Trail as a Bicycling Route**

- 1.5.1 Proposed TCT road links shall be submitted by the TCT committee, to the ATC.
- 1.5.2. The proposed road links shall be evaluated against Directive 1.2
- 1.5.3 Sections of the TCT that are located on provincial roads, are forwarded to CE, with a recommendation that they be designated TCT.
- 1.5.4 Upon receiving a recommendation, the CE will either:
- Approve the section(s) for designation if they meet the criteria outlined in Directive 1.2.
  - Conditionally approve the section(s) for designation if don't meet the criteria outlined in Directive 1.2, however do meet the Special Circumstances in 2.3.
  - Reject the proposed sections.
- 1.5.5 If approved, the ATC will request that the AM have their DTS investigate the proposed location for placement of the “Share the Road” sign assembly in accordance with policy PO1024 “*Share the Road*” Sign Assembly, *Application Guide for Provincial Highways*.

- 1.5.6 After approval or conditional approval, sections of the Proposed TCT that require upgrading will be noted in TIR's Capital Program, for consideration of the addition of paved shoulders when the section is scheduled for repaving or reconstruction.
- 1.5.7 When an approved TCT road section meets the criteria in Directive 1.2 or is conditionally approved under the Special Circumstances, the ATC will recommend to the AM that TCT Route Signage be allowed on the section. Signage will adhere to the "TCT Road Signage Guidelines" with modifications/restrictions as requested by TIR and outlined in Appendix C. TIR must approve any signage schedule proposed by TCT on provincial roads.
- 1.5.8 If the TCT is co-branded with the Blue Route, TCT signs will be added to the sign assembly to be used for the Blue Route.

## **Guidelines**

### **2.1 Special Circumstances for Designating a Bicycling Route**

- 2.1.1 Roads that have had 0.8m shoulders paved to facilitate bicycling, that were either unable to achieve the minimum width of the *S-2011-200 Paved Shoulder Width for Active Transportation*, as per *Policy PO1063 Shoulder widths for Active Transportation Policy*, or were paved with a 0.8m shoulder prior to the implementation of that policy, are still eligible to be designated as a bicycling route, as per the directives outlined in this policy and approved by the Manager of Hwy Planning and Design.

The bicycling assessment tool will be utilized to make and document this decision.



