

WHAT ARE THE TYPICAL DESIGN STANDARDS FOR BIKE PATHS?

Bikeway facility standards are presented in a publication entitled "Bicycle Facilities Planning and Design Manual" published by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT). This Manual contains the information necessary to plan, locate, select, and design bicycle facilities. A copy of the FDOT Bicycle Facilities Planning & Design Manual may be obtained from: http://www11.myflorida.com/safety/ped_bike/ped_bike_standards.htm#Florida%20Bike%20Handbook

Multi-use Trails (paths) are facilities on exclusive rights-of-way and with minimal cross flow by motor vehicles. Since bicycle paths are almost always used by pedestrians, joggers, in-line skaters, equestrians and bicyclists, they are referred to as multi-use trails. The FDOT design elements for multi-use trails are:

Width of a Multi-use Trail:

Under most conditions the minimum recommended paved width for a two-directional trail is 12 feet. The minimum width for a one-directional multi-use trail is 5 feet. One-way multi-use trails, will be used as two-way facilities unless effective measures are used to assure one-way operation. Without such design and enforcement, it should be assumed that shared use paths will be used as two-way facilities. They should be designed accordingly.

Horizontal Clearances of a Multi-use Trail:

A minimum, 4 feet of clearance is desirable to provide distance from trees, poles, walls, fences, guardrails, or other lateral obstructions. A 2 feet width graded area should be maintained adjacent to both sides of the pavement. A wider graded area on either side of the shared use path can serve as a separate jogging path. Any edge drop-off should be eliminated.

Vertical Clearances of a Multi-use Trail:

The vertical clearance to obstructions should be a minimum of 8 feet. However, vertical clearance may need to be greater to permit passage of maintenance vehicles and, in undercrossings and tunnels, a clearance of 10 feet is desirable for adequate physical and psychological vertical shy distance. Equestrian trails should be designed with a 10 foot vertical clearance.

Bike Lane Width:

Bicycle lanes are to be used on urban roadway sections, whenever right-of-way and existing curb/drainage sections permit. Occasionally it is possible to convert wide curb lanes on multi-lane highways to bike lanes by reducing the travel lane widths to 11 feet, and turn lanes to 10 feet. The width of the bike lane is included within the motorist clear zone and horizontal clear distance. Additional clearance is not required.

Bike Lane on Curb and Gutter Sections:

Bicyclists do not generally ride near a gutter because of the possibility of debris, of hitting a pedal on the curb, of an uneven longitudinal joint, or of a steeper cross slope. However, many novice bike riders will ride in a gutter if the roadway is too narrow, and thus bike lanes help reduce this problem. Bicycle lanes in this location should have a minimum width of 4 feet from the edge of pavement to the motor vehicle travel lane. Since Florida measures most dimensions from the edge of pavement, it can be assumed an additional 1.5 feet lateral separation exists from the curb face.