

SHARED ROADWAYS

The most critical variable affecting the ability of a roadway to accommodate bicycle traffic is width. Adequate width may be achieved by providing paved shoulders or wide outside lanes.

- Paved Shoulders

Paved shoulders should be at least 4 feet wide to accommodate bicycle travel. However, where 4 foot minimum widths cannot be provided, any additional shoulder width is better than none at all. A shoulder width of 5 feet is required from the face of guardrail, curb or other roadside barriers, or if motor vehicle speeds exceed 50 mph, or the percentage of trucks, buses, and recreational vehicles is 5% or greater^{*}, or if lateral obstructions exist at the right side of the roadway. It is desirable to increase the width of shoulders where higher bicycle usage is expected. Paved shoulders are not to be designated (marked or signed) as “bike lanes”.

On rural and urban collector and local roads and streets, provide minimum 5 foot wide paved shoulders when:

- a) Design Year ADT > 2000 VPD, with \geq 5% total truck and bus usage
and
- b) The route is an AASHTO Approved U.S. Bicycle Route (1, 76 or 176) or designated as a bicycle route on a Locality's Transportation Plan.

For the above situations, the remainder of the shoulder will be topsoil and seeded.

AASHTO's recommendations for shoulder width (as described in *A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets*) are the best guide for bicycles as well, since wider shoulders are recommended on heavily traveled and high-speed roads and those carrying large numbers of trucks. In order to be usable by bicyclists, the shoulder must be paved.

Rumble strips or raised pavement markers, where installed to discourage or warn motorists they are driving on the shoulder, are not recommended where shoulders are used by bicyclists unless there is a minimum clear path of 1 foot from the rumble strip to the traveled way, 4 feet from the rumble strip to the outside edge of paved shoulder, or 5 feet to adjacent guardrail, curb or other obstacle. If existing conditions preclude achieving the minimum desirable clearance, the width of the rumble strip may be decreased or other appropriate alternative solutions should be considered. VDOT's policy is to not install pavement markers along the outside edge line of a travelway. See [IIM-LD-212](#).

* Rev. 1/17