National Committee on
Uniform Traffic Control Devices

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Item Number: 26A-BIK-01

NCUTCD PROPOSAL FOR CHANGES TO THE MANUAL ON UNIFORM TRAFFIC CONTROL DEVICES

COMMITTEE / TASK FORCE:	Bicycle Technical Committee
ITEM NUMBER:	26A-BIK-01
TOPIC:	Bikeway Speed Limit Signs
ORIGIN OF REQUEST:	Bicycle Technical Committee
AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD:	9B.24

DEVELOPMENT HISTORY:
Approved by Bicycle TC: 01/08/2026
Concurrence from RWSTC: 01/08/2026
Approved by NCUTCD Council: .....

This is a proposed change to the MUTCD that has been developed by a technical committee, joint committee, or joint task force of the NCUTCD. The NCUTCD is distributing this to its sponsoring organizations for review and comment. Sponsor comments will be considered in revising the proposal prior to NCUTCD Council consideration. This proposal does not represent a revision of the MUTCD and does not constitute official MUTCD standards, guidance, options, or support. If approved by the NCUTCD Council, the recommended changes will be submitted to FHWA for consideration for inclusion in a future MUTCD revision. The MUTCD can be revised only through the federal rulemaking process.

SUMMARY:
The use of electrically assisted bicycles has increased significantly. E-bikes allow a user to travel farther and at a higher speed than on a conventional human-powered bicycle. These higher bicycle speeds can be in excess of the typical path design speed. This proposal provides information on posting speed limits on separated bikeways, bikeways, and shared use paths.

DISCUSSION:

The popularity of e-bikes has increased significantly and indications are that their use will continue to increase. The ease of use of an e-bike also encourages people of all ages and abilities to cycle that may not typically use a standard human-powered bicycle. Recent studies indicate that users travel at a higher speed on an e-bike when compared to a human-powered bicycle.

The current engineering standard practice for design of a shared-use path (SUP) includes the designation of a path design speed (D). The choice of design speed is influenced by the topography and terrain of the path area but typically the range has been 18-20 miles per hour (mph). Based on the D value, other geometric criteria such as horizontal curve radii, vertical curve length and stopping sight distance are selected. On SUP's that are constructed on former railroad corridors, the selection of

design speed and geometric criteria is not critical as the SUP geometrics mirror the original geometrics of the railroad which significantly exceeds, by several orders of magnitude, the SUP geometric criteria.

But for SUPs on independent alignments, the selection of a design speed is more critical. It is more than reasonable to anticipate that given the typical higher speeds of e-bikes, users may easily and readily exceed the design speeds of 18-20 mph previously selected for existing SUP's.

In the past, posting bicycle speeds on shared-use paths has not been a common practice since most conventional bicycles are not equipped with a speedometer. For e-bikes, the default display on an e-bike control panel is remaining battery life and bicycle speed.

The 2023 MUTCD does not provide any information for posting of bicycle speed limits should agencies decide posting bikeway speed limits is appropriate. This proposal seeks to fill that gap. It is noted that this proposal includes provisions that the posting of speed limits on SUP's should be accompanied by legislative/ordinance initiatives.

RECOMMENDED MUTCD CHANGES:

The following present the proposed changes to the current MUTCD within the context of the current MUTCD language. Proposed additions to the MUTCD are shown in blue underline and proposed deletions from the MUTCD are shown in ~~red strikethrough~~. Changes previously approved by NCUTCD Council (but not yet adopted by FHWA) are shown in green double underline for additions and ~~green double strikethrough~~ for deletions. In some cases, background comments may be provided with the MUTCD text. These comments are indicated by [bracketed white text in shaded green]. Deletions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in ~~highlighted red strikethrough and sans-serif text~~. Additions made by a technical committee, joint committee, or task force after initial distribution to sponsoring organizations are shown in underline blue and sans-serif text.

PART 9
TRAFFIC CONTROL FOR BICYCLE FACILITIES

CHAPTER 9B. REGULATORY SIGNS

Section 9B.24a Bikeway Speed Limit Signs R2-1a

Option:

01 The Bikeway Speed Limit (R2-1a, R2-1b) sign may be used on a shared-use path or on a separated bicycle lane by authorized agencies in jurisdictions that have defined in law, ordinance, regulation, or by agency adoption a specific bikeway speed limit for such facilities.

Support

02 Agencies with designated authority to set speed limits can establish non-statutory limits or designated speed zones for shared-use paths or separated bicycle lanes using an engineering study.

Standard:

03 Where used, the Bikeway Speed Limit (R2-1a, R2-1b) sign (see Figure 9B-1) shall display the limit established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by an authorized agency based on an engineering study. The speed limits displayed shall be no less than 8 mph in multiples of 2 mph or 5 mph.

Guidance:

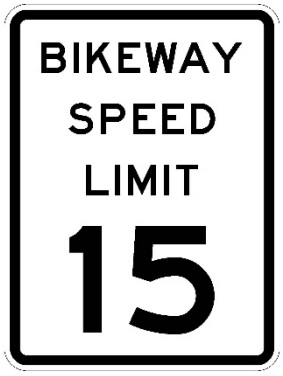
04 When establishing non-statutory limits or designated speed zones for shared-use paths or separated bicycle lanes, the AASHTO "Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities" should be referenced for information on the various factors to be included in the engineering study for selection of an appropriate bikeway speed limit.

05 If used, Bikeway Speed Limit signs should be installed at locations deemed appropriate based on engineering judgment.

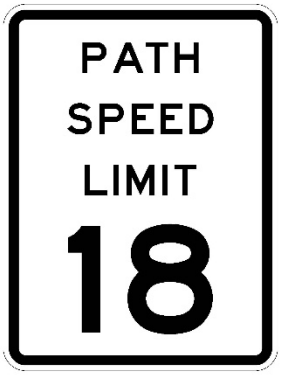
[This section derived from text in Section 2B.21 Speed Limit Sign (R2-1) and Section 9B.15 Bicycle Passing Clearance Sign (R4-19).]

[Existing Figure 9B-1 in its entirety is omitted from proposal. Signs as shown below would be appended to signs in Figure 9B-1].

Figure 9B-1 Regulatory Signs and Plaques for Bicycle Facilities



R2-1a



R2-1b