NOTE: This is a recommendation by NCUTCD to FHWA to add or revise the content of the MUTCD. This proposal by itself does not constitute official standards or guidance. Regardless of NCUTCD approval status, any proposed change or revision has no legal or official status until specifically approved by FHWA through either the Interim Approval process or adoption into a new edition of the MUTCD.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Bicycle Technical Committee (BTC)

TOPIC: Signing for Bicycle Access to Freeways

STATUS/DATE OF ACTION:
TC Drafts: 06/17/2009
TC Approval: 06/19/2009
Transmitted to Sponsors: 08/09/2009
TC Revision: 01/06/2010
Council Approval: 01/08/2010

ORIGIN OF REQUEST: FHWA Sign Synthesis, RWSTC

AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: Chapter 9B - Bicycle Regulatory Signs (Section 9B.10 in the 2003 MUTCD, Section 9B.11 of the draft NPA):

SUMMARY & DISCUSSION:

In some instances, such as in isolated rural areas or on bridges over large rivers or other natural features or barriers, a freeway may be the only available means of travel between destinations. To accommodate through travel, a number of States and other highway agencies permit bicycle travel on the shoulders of freeways under their jurisdiction. A notable observation has been that very few bicycle-motor vehicle crashes have been reported on freeway shoulders open to bicycle travel around the US.

As states have adopted policies and guidelines for bicycle access to freeways, a variety of different signs have been developed to address bicycle permission and prohibition. In the recent Non-MUTCD Sign Synthesis, FHWA identified several signs in use across the US, and suggested that this category of signs be standardized in the national MUTCD. The NCUTCD Regulatory & Warning Sign Technical Committee (RWSTC) has also asked the BTC to look into this issue.
The BTC is proposing the following section and figures to add these signs to the Federal MUTCD. The NCUTCD RWSTC has reviewed and concurred with this proposal.
RECOMMENDED MUTCD PROVISIONS/ REVISIONS:

Add the following text and figures to the section on Bicycle Regulatory Signs (Section 9B.11 of the 2009 MUTCD):

Option:

The Bicycles Use Shoulder Only (R9-xx) sign may be used to denote locations on a freeway where bicyclists are permitted, but must remain on an available and usable shoulder.

The On Freeway plaque (R5-xxP) may be used with an appropriate Selective Exclusion sign to denote a prohibition on ramps leading to an adjacent or parallel freeway (see Figure 9B-x2).

Standard:

The Bicycles Use Shoulder Only sign shall only be used on freeways.

The Bicycles Must Exit (R5-xx) sign shall be used in advance of a location where a freeway becomes prohibited to bicycle travel, and shall be placed in advance of the last intersection or ramp prior to the prohibited segment of freeway (see Figure 9B-x1). If the Bicycles Must Exit sign is used, a R5-6 No Bicycles sign shall be placed downstream from the intersection or ramp where the prohibited segment of freeway begins.

Guidance:

The Bicycles Use Shoulder Only sign should be placed adjacent to the on-ramp or entrance to the freeway at or near the location where the full-width shoulder resumes beyond the entrance ramp taper.
Figure 9B-x1. Signing For Termination of Bicycle Access on Freeways

- R5-6 (36" size)
- 100 - 300 ft
- EXIT 000
- Destination Rd
- R5-xx
  MUST EXIT 000
Figure 9B-x2. Signing For Freeways Where Bicyclists Are Prohibited (With Adjacent Frontage Road)

* Alternate location if R5-10a / M6-2L can’t be placed in location shown

50 - 100 ft

R5-10a (or other appropriate R5 series sign)

R5-xxP plaque
MUST EXIT
USE SHOULDER ONLY

R9-xx
Bicycles Use Shoulder Only
R5-xxP
'On Freeway' plaque
30" x 12" panel, 4B text