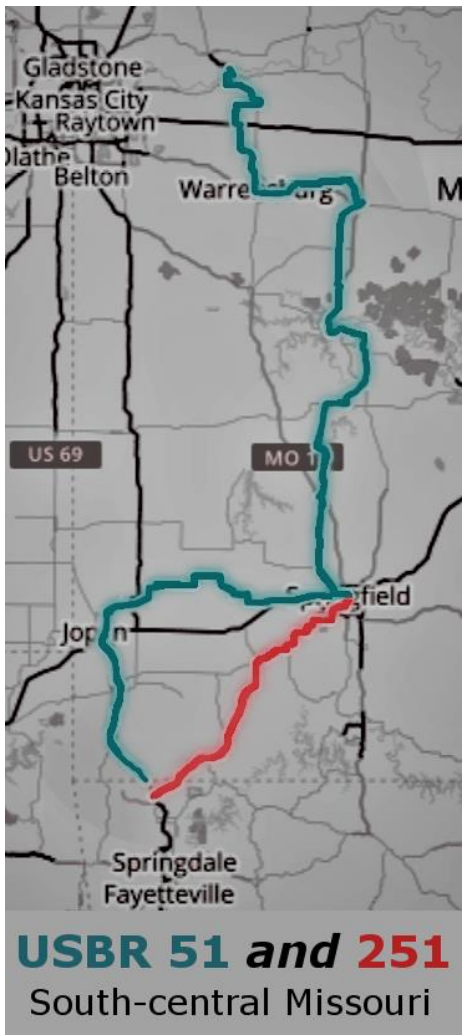


US Bike Route 51 (USBR 51) Designation



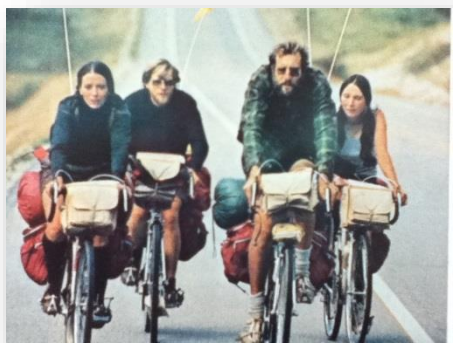


U.S. Bicycle Route 51 is a cross-country bicycle route current under development, which will stretch from New Orleans, Louisiana to northwest Minnesota, where it will connect with US Bicycle Routes 8, 10, and 20.

USBR in Missouri is envisioned to connect from the Razorback Trail in northwest Arkansas through Joplin, Springfield, Bolivar, Warsaw, Warrensburg, Lexington, Excelsior Springs, and Bethany, Missouri, with the northern terminus at Lamoni, IA. Many segments of USBR 51 in Missouri are currently finalized and agreed to by local jurisdictions, while others are still under discussion and subject to change.

A Missouri USBR 51 Committee, consisting of representatives of communities, counties, and Regional Planning Commissions along the route, as well as representatives from MoDOT, the Adventure Cycling Association, and the Missouri Bicycle and Pedestrian Federation, have been working to develop the USBR 51 route in Missouri and submit it to AASHTO for formal designation as an official national bicycle route.

The **United States Bicycle Route System** (abbreviated USBRS) is the national cycling route network of the United States. It consists of interstate long-distance cycling routes which connect multiple types of bicycling infrastructure; including off-road paths, bicycle lanes, and low-traffic roads. As with the U.S. Numbered Highways system for motorists, each U.S. Bicycle Route is maintained by state and local governments. The USBRS is intended to eventually traverse the entire country like similar networks that span Europe.



The USBRS was established in 1978 by the **American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials** (AASHTO), the same body that coordinates the numbering of Interstate highways and U.S. Routes. The first two Bicycle Routes were established in 1982 and stood alone until 2011.

In 2004, the AASHTO Standing Committee on Highways convened an ad hoc Task Force *...to encourage the development of a coordinated system of U.S. bicycle routes across the country, the Task Force is charged with developing a recommended national systems-level or corridor-level plan for use in designating potential future U.S. bicycle routes.* Since then there has steady growth and interest

in the system, and as of September 2022, 18,534 miles across 33 states and the District of Columbia have received “designated” route status. The system, once fully connected, is projected to encompass over 50,000 miles (80,000 km) of bike routes.

A central purpose of the U.S. bicycle route numbering and marking system is to facilitate travel between the states over routes which have been identified as being more suitable than others for cycling. A bicycle route is any road, street, path or way which in some manner is specifically designated as being open to bicycle travel, regardless of whether such facilities are designated for the exclusive use of bicycles or are to be shared with other transportation modes.

Missouri has two designated U.S. Bicycle Route: USBR 76 (the TransAmerica Trail) and USBR



66 (Bicycle Route 66). Both of these national routes are well used – Bicycle Route 66 is second only to the Katy Trail as the most commonly used cross-state bicycle route in Missouri.

Once a route is officially designated as a U.S. Bicycle Route, standardized USBR wayfinding signs can be installed. USBR 76 is marked across the state with the standardized USBR wayfinding signs. Route users greatly appreciate the signs, as navigation of the route is greatly simplified. USBR 66 has not yet received wayfinding signs, but Route 66 communities are working together to develop funding to install the wayfinding signs statewide.

In addition, Missouri has three USBR corridors that can be developed: USBR 50 (the Lewis & Clark Trail), USBR 45 (the Mississippi River Trail), and USBR 51 (currently under development).

MISSOURI SUPPORT:

A US Bicycle Route has a direct impact on the communities it passes through by offering planned, identified connectivity alternatives, and recreational and health opportunities. Regionally, it encourages transportation and tourism gateways such as history and agriculture trails. Statewide, a designated US Bicycle Route connects communities globally with riders who may never have visited (much less heard of) small town Missouri.

The work that needs to be accomplished:

- 1) MoDOT will need letters of agreement/support from the agencies where the USBR 66 is on city and county maintained roadways, and not on State maintained roadways. Local Legislators could be of assistance by starting and supporting the conversation about the benefits of a USBR through a community/county, and encourage local agencies to be in support the effort.
- 2) The project, through MoDOT could also use some sort of State-level funding from the General Revenue, Tourism, Economic Development, or a combination of sources to fund the statewide signing package; estimated at around \$200K. MoDOT will also need to fund a rather significant inventory of replacement signs – knowing “66” on any type of signage often disappears from highway signposts. Once exact dollar estimates are known by city and county, some funds could be raised from local sources and/or private donors to help with the overall signing effort.
- 3) MoDOT, along with tourism and cycling advocates envision supportive elected-officials taking part in various ribbon cutting ceremonies to be held as signing sectors have been completed.



ON LETTERHEAD

Patrick K. McKenna
Director, Missouri Department of Transportation
105 W. Capitol Avenue
Jefferson City, MO 65102

February __, 2023

Subject: US Bicycle Route 51 designation

Director McKenna,

DRAFT EXAMPLE

The City of _____ extends its support for the designation of the proposed U.S. Bicycle Route 51 (USBR51) through our community.

We recognize that bicycle tourism is a growing niche within our regional tourism markets. Nationwide bicycle tourism contributes \$83 billion a year to the economies of bike-friendly communities. As a community, we stand to benefit from this opportunity, plus the added health and environmental-related benefits of encouraging bicycle travel in our region.

The U.S. Bicycle Route System is a bicycle-based transportation system sponsored by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The project creates publicly accessible bicycle travel routes across the country. All routes are designated through a state- and federal-level process, to build broad support for bicycling and bicycle travel in communities across the country.

The City of _____ lies along the proposed USBR51 system that one day will stretch from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Des Moines, Iowa. Access through our community will afford cyclist access to points of interest, lodging, dining, and retail necessary to support extended and day-long journeys. In a city of 1,992 residents, the proposed USBR51 will additionally provide benefits to our residents and businesses.

We endorse having the route mapped and marked as an official U.S. Bike Route, promoting bicycle tourism in our area. Therefore, the City of Anderson expresses its support for USBR51 and requests that the appropriate officials nominate the route for AASHTO designation as soon as possible.

SIGNED: _____
(authorized signatory)