



ABOVE AND BEYOND. BY DESIGN.

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Testimony Before
The House Transportation Committee
Regarding
House Bill 2068

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Good afternoon, my name is Brian Shields, the City Traffic Engineer for the City of Overland Park. On behalf of the city, I appreciate the opportunity to present information on House Bill 2068 which would remove language requiring mandatory use of sidepaths by bicyclists.

Kansas Statute K.S.A. 8-1590(d) reads as follows:

“Wherever a usable path for bicycles has been provided adjacent to a roadway, bicycle riders shall use such path and shall not use the roadway.”

Laws similar to this first appeared in many states circa 1944 when the Uniform Vehicle Code (UVC) was proposed as a model for state-level legislation. By the late 1970’s some 38 states had adopted this type of restriction on bicycles. Model legislation of this type is no longer part of the UVC, and today only a handful of states continue to keep this law on the books, Kansas being one of eight.

During the last 16 months Overland Park has undertaken a bicycle study to quantify bike safety issues and the mobility needs of our residents. The study was led by a nationally recognized bicycle planning firm that has provided similar services to other municipalities in this state and across the country. The study included an outreach component where we engaged the public in various ways (focus groups, surveys, public input sessions, etc.) to gather input on the state of bicycling in our city.

Part of the study process was to review local and state laws and policies to identify anything that might need to be changed to facilitate implementation of the study’s recommendations. Because the study recommends striping bike lanes adjacent to existing bike/hike paths, this particular statute was identified.

Overland Park has constructed a number of miles of bike-hike trails, some of which parallel our street network. In many cases the trail may only exist adjacent to a street for a short distance before it ends abruptly (due to gaps in development) or it may connect to a larger trail system mid-block that may then run parallel to a streamway away from the street network. In cases like

this it would be difficult for a cyclist to abruptly enter and exit the street network and adjacent path. Sometimes the path may also meander along the street such that a bicyclist may be confused as to whether the route constitutes a “usable path” as outlined in the Statute.

Safety between bicyclists and pedestrians is also a concern that was identified during our study. A bicycle may often be ridden at speeds of 10 to 15 mph. A typical walking speed for a pedestrian is no more than 3 to 4 mph. Such disparity in speeds on a common path can cause issues when sudden movements are made unexpectedly.

Another issue that is a concern involves the overall mobility needs of bicyclists. Using a bicycle for transportation purposes for many frequent riders means getting from one destination to another in an expeditious manner. Requiring bicycles to use adjacent usable paths next to streets also requires them to follow various laws not required when they ride in the street. For example, a bicyclist riding on a street need only stop when required at stop signs or traffic signals. A bicyclist using a shared use path is required by law to stop at each public crossing thereby adding to their total commute time.

Based on our work over the last few years developing a comprehensive bike plan for our city and listening to the concerns of bicyclists of all ages and abilities as well as other users of our street network, we believe removing the requirement for bicyclists to utilize adjacent paths will lead to a safer and more bicycle friendly environment in Kansas. The City of Overland Park asks that you recommend House Bill 2068 favorably for passage.