



**MISSOURI BICYCLE
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MAKING MISSOURI A BETTER PLACE TO WALK AND RIDE A BICYCLE!

St Charles County Bicycle Proposals - MoBikeFed's position

St. Charles County, Missouri, is proposing a several possible updates to the county's bicycle law:

1. An **outright ban of bicycles** on several roads in the county
2. **Additional requirements for bicyclists** traveling on certain designated roads in the county, including requiring a safety flag and mirror, riding less than 20 inches from the white line, and never riding abreast

3. A **permitting system for group rides** with more than 20 riders

MoBikeFed's position on these issues:

1. Bicycle ban on certain roads

- The ban unfairly **restricts bicyclist's liberty and freedom of travel**; it will create the most sweeping ban of bicycles of any city or county in the U.S.
- **No alternative routes exist** for most of the proposed routes--the effect will be making numerous destinations inaccessible to those who depend on bicycling for transportation.
- There is no data that shows a bicycle ban will improve safety; in fact, **injury and fatality data over the past five years show that less than 1% of traffic injuries/fatalities on these roads involve bicyclists in any way** (and those incidents involved injury to the bicyclists but none to the motorists).
- Banning bicycles does **nothing to address the core reasons these roads are dangerous** to drive on.
- A **court challenge to a bicycle ban is inevitable** and the bicycle ban is very likely to be struck down.

2. Extra requirements for bicyclists on certain routes

- We strongly encourage the county to **adopt bicycling regulations to bring the county's laws into conformity with state bicycle law**.
- **MoBikeFed's proposed changes** (online at MoBikeFed.org/StCharlesProposedBicycleLawUpdate) address the main concerns the county has--riding abreast, riding as near to the right as safe, needed lights, brakes,



and other safety equipment.

- The county's proposals (safety flag, mirror, no riding abreast, riding within 20 inches of the fog line) are **non-standard and contradict bicycle law in other cities, counties, and states across the U.S.**
- **Communicating these complex and non-standard requirements**--which will only apply on certain roads in the county--will be very difficult. A simplified summary, as likely to appear on a road sign, is likely to be completely baffling--or simply be overlooked entirely--by bicyclists coming from outside the county.
- How will bicyclists crossing the country on the national Great River Road, Lewis & Clark, and American Discovery Trail bicycle routes as they pass through St Charles County, or those visiting the county with their bicycles, **obtain mirrors or flags?** These are not standard equipment and are not required in any other jurisdiction; most bicyclists will not have them and they are not easily available. Some bicycles have no practical way to mount such devices.
- Because the proposed changes are non-standard, and not required in any other jurisdiction in the U.S., **compliance will be low or nonexistent.**
- Does St Charles County really have the manpower to enforce these nonstandard requirements? **Without significant enforcement, the requirements are likely to be ignored.**
- Because the proposed changes **contradict state bicycle law in several respects, they will be challenged and overturned.**

3. Require permits for group rides

- Permits and reasonable requirements for group rides (including requirements to have a safety plan, educate their riders, etc) are **generally a good idea.**
- **Creating better communication within the County government and with County residents** about upcoming bicycle events is a very good idea and we fully support it.
- The **"20 bicyclist" limit for requiring permits is too low**--it should be 50 to 100.
- If the **limit is set too low it will simply be ignored by small informal rides,** defeating the purpose of the law.



- Does the County really have law enforcement manpower enough to track down every small group of riders in the County and find out if they have proper permits? If not, the **County will be relying on voluntary compliance with the permitting requirements--which will only work if the requirements are reasonable.**

In General

- Bicycle has become an issue of importance in St. Charles County. The County should work with residents, political leaders, business leaders, and interested organizations to craft a comprehensive, well designed **County Bicycle Plan**.
- It is clear to everyone that some routes in the County are better suited for bicycling than others. This is true everywhere--forward looking areas advertise their best, most suitable bicycle routes by creating a **County Bicycle Map** with color-coded routes for those best suited, moderate, and least suited for bicycling, and showing how the area's trail system connects with bicycle friendly roads.
- Bicyclists and bicycle groups across the state will support the County's effort to **add shoulders and/or bicycle lanes to narrow roads with high traffic volume**. This addresses underlying safety issues while creating more space for bicycling. Shoulders must be designed with bicycling in mind, however, including the design of any rumble strips that may be included.

Conclusion

Bicycling is good for the county, good for county residents, good for public health, and good for tourism and economic development.

Most municipalities across the nation are now working hard to make themselves friendlier and more inviting for bicycling and walking.

St Charles County has always been seen as a healthy, forward-looking area that looks after the wellbeing of its citizens and promotes active living and its beautiful natural setting.

Creating good, carefully crafted bicycle laws in St Charles County are part of making that vision a reality.