



Texas Department of Transportation

DEWITT C. GREER STATE HIGHWAY BLDG. • 125 E. 11TH STREET • AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701-2483 • (512) 463-8585

May 8, 2009

Mr. Robin Stallings
Executive Director
Texas Bicycle Coalition
Post Office Box 1121
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Stallings:

As per my letter dated, September 25, 2008, the Texas Department of Transportation has completed its research into current seal coat design and construction practices. Our research has indicated that certain practices may reduce the impact to the bicycling community. To that end, we have issued a memorandum to our district engineers (attached). This memorandum also stresses the importance of sweeping travel lanes and shoulders after rock application.

We look forward to working with bicyclists across Texas to improve shoulders for use by the cycling community. If you have any further comment or questions, please contact Paul Douglas at 486-5112 or by email at pdouglas@dot.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

John A. Barton, P.E.
Assistant Executive Director
Engineering Operations

Attachment

cc: James L. Randall, P.E., Director, Transportation Planning and Programming Division,
TxDOT
Jennifer Moczygemba, P.E., Transportation Planning and Programming Division, TxDOT
Paul Douglas, Transportation Planning and Programming Division, TxDOT



MEMORANDUM

TO: District Engineers

DATE: April 13, 2009

FROM: John A. Barton, P.E. *John A. Barton P.E.*

SUBJECT: Accommodating Bicycles in Seal Coat Construction

Seal coating is a cost effective and widely used maintenance technique. However, seal coats may not always be ideal for modes of transportation other than automobiles. In particular, seal coats can, in some cases, present difficulties for bicyclists. To promote the accommodation of bicycle traffic, in accordance with the TxDOT mission, I am providing guidance to address the needs of the bicycle-riding public while supporting the use of seal coats for low cost preventive maintenance.

We should consider bicyclists' needs as we develop our PS&E and contracts. In particular, we should give a high priority to planning for bicycle traffic for routes with high numbers of either commuter or recreational bicyclists. You are encouraged to also work with local bicycle groups to identify the safest routes in your district. It is important to consider the availability of shoulders, horizontal alignments, intersection traffic, and traffic volumes in the selection of these routes. You can use this planning to create specific corridors for bicyclists to use. Road signs may be installed to mark these routes and maps may be placed on the TxDOT website to apprise bicyclists of these corridors and of impending roadwork.

Past research has shown that smoother surfaces are desirable for bicyclists. When placing a seal coat as a final driving surface, consider one of the following low cost options to provide an improved riding surface for bicycles:

- use a smaller seal coat aggregate,
- use a smaller seal coat aggregate on the shoulders,
- use fog seal on existing seal coated shoulders rather than a new seal coat, or
- use smaller aggregate for the top course of multiple course seal coats.

For high bicycle traffic areas, consider installing advanced signage and notices of construction activities that could affect bicycling activities. Coordinate construction and maintenance work that could affect bicycle events with local sponsors and bicycle groups. We should be diligent about sweeping excess aggregate from seal coat projects one to two weeks after completing the work, and performing additional sweeping of shoulders if necessary to remove loose aggregate or debris after the job is completed.

In addition, signing and pavement markings for bicycle lanes or designated bicycle routes should follow Part 9 of the Texas Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. Bicycle routes and lanes that are affected due to construction, should be treated the same as pedestrian walkways or roadways that are under construction. Accommodations should be made to provide alternative routes if any of these routes are disrupted or closed due to construction. A black on orange detour plaque should be installed on bike route signs when providing a detour as shown on the attachment.

Attachment

cc: District Directors of Construction
District Directors of Maintenance
District Directors of Transportation Planning and Development
Thomas R. Bohuslav, P.E., Director, Construction Division
Mark A. Marek, P.E., Director, Design Division
Toribio Garza, Jr., P.E., Director, Maintenance Division
Carlos A. Lopez, P.E., Director, Traffic Operations Division



Example of detour sign placed on a bike route sign.