Bicycling Related Legislative Policy 
Issues for 2019

There are several policy changes that BikeMN feels will make riding a bike safer. The first is changing the confusing and widely interpreted as far to the right as practicable riding rule to as far to the right as safe as determined by the bicycle operator. BikeMN also supports allowing the bicycle operator to choose to ride through a right turn lane without turning right which is current law in several states but not Minnesota.

Another major concern identified by BikeMN is that the rights of bicyclists riding on the shoulder of the roadway are not as clearly defined as when riding on the roadway. Operating on a shoulder is permitted but there are issues like who has the right-of-way at an intersection, if the 3-foot passing rule applies, and is it safer to ride through a right turn lane or merge onto the roadway? And, what if the shoulder is marked as a bike lane? As the statutes are written now bicyclists have fewer rights than if that bike lane were on the roadway.

BikeMN supports H.F. 462 and S.F. 1014 which make the following changes:

- Changes to broaden a definition of bikeway for the chapter of statutes on traffic regulations, which had been introduced last year (as part of MnDOT’s bikeway initiative), and to centralize definitions.
- Modifying the meaning of bicycle lanes so that all bike lanes are considered part of the roadway (that is, the main traveled portion of a road) and not a shoulder (the contiguous portion of the road that is not traveled upon except by bicycles and other slow moving vehicles and in some cases buses).
- Resolving a potential ambiguity in passing distance when overtaking bicycles, to require at least three feet or half of a vehicle’s width when passing, whichever is greater, but allow for passing in a separate lane. This is done to match a 2017 provision on driving to the left side of a road when overtaking a bicyclist. It also contains various technical cleanup to modernize the language.
- Clarifies that bicyclists operating in a shoulder have the same rights as when operating on the road generally. It also contains a technical change, to reproduce language on sidewalk and crosswalk operating authority that is being moved from another section of statutes (see the corresponding stricken language in section 6).
- Changes the poorly understood as far to the right as practicable language to as far to the right as the bicycle operator determines is safe.
- Makes it legal for bicyclists to proceed straight through an intersection from a right-hand turn lane.