

Width of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists

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This report summarizes current knowledge about how the width of infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists affects safety, behavior, and mobility, and it provides an overview of regulations and recommendations about minimum width in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, and Germany. Types of infrastructure included in the review are sidewalks, bicycle tracks and lanes, shared paths for the use of pedestrians and bicyclists, and bicycle streets. Empirical studies from different countries show that wide cross sections generally are safer, provide better mobility (higher speed). Wide cross sections are also preferred by pedestrians and cyclists, and width is among the most important infrastructure features, besides separation from motorized traffic. Minimum acceptable widths are not easy to specify. Amongst other things, they depend on bicycle or pedestrian volumes and speed, the type of separation from other road users, whether the area beside the sidewalk or bicycle track/lane can be used, if there is motorized traffic with high volumes or speed beside the sidewalk or bicycle lane/track, and if there are roadside hazards close to the sidewalk or bicycle lane/track. For example, a bicycle lane on a road with high speed and high traffic volume should be wider than a bicycle lane on a calm low-volume road. Individual preferences are also important. Maximum widths are usually not recommended, except for shared path which usually should be divided into a bicycle track and sidewalk from a certain level of pedestrians and cyclists, rather than to increase its width. Recommendations for bicycle infrastructure where minimum width requirements cannot be met, differ between countries. Some allow substandard solutions under certain circumstances, while others do not allow exceptions and rather create detours for cyclists or introduce traffic calming measures to allow mixed traffic.