



HB 101

The "Better Bicycling Bill"

Please SUPPORT HB 101, a comprehensive bill that updates and modernizes existing O.C.G.A. "Rules of the Road" by clarifying existing statutes, provides for the use of efficient, modern equipment and mandates safer cycling practices.

Summary of each update in HB 101:

- **40-1-1 (6.1)** Bicycle lanes, the standard bicycle facility in Georgia, were not previously mentioned in state law. This section ensures bicycle lanes are installed according to the minimum standard national guidelines. This is a definition that both the Georgia DOT and Georgia Bikes! are comfortable with. Subsequent sections include update of bicycle lane as a defined facility in relevant code.
- **40-6-55** In defining a space for the exclusive use of bicyclists (bike lanes), this requirement increases the safety of bicyclists who subsequently use this facility type. Many bicycle-car crashes occur at intersections, so defining who has right of way and who must yield is vital to preventing confusion and crashes.
- **40-6-291 (b)** In rural and suburban areas in particular, bicyclists often travel on roadways that have paved shoulders. These facilities are recognized by the Georgia DOT as roadway features that add to the safety and mobility of bicyclists and automobile drivers. Car-bicycle crashes on paved shoulders previously took place in a legally undefined travel space, leaving bicyclists less protected by the law. At the same time, bicyclists should not be required to use paved shoulders that may be blocked by debris or rendered unusable due to potholes or other poor pavement conditions.
- (c) The right arm extended right turn signal is more readily understood by motorists, who are often confused by the left hand and arm extended upward signal, a relic of when cars did not have turn signals and drivers used the left arm extended from the driver's side window to indicate turns.
- **40-6-292 (c)** The requirement that children under one year of age wear helmets cannot be met as distributors do not make helmets for children younger than about 11 months old. This is due to the lack of neck strength needed to support a proper fitting helmet. In addition, an infant's head must be large enough to fit the helmet, which generally happens around one year of age.

• **40-6-294 (a) and (b)** The current definition of bicyclists' roadway positioning lacks clarity as to what hazards or under what circumstances bicyclists may need to ride in a position other than as far to the right as practicable. This section causes a great deal of confusion among drivers who expected bicyclists to ride as far to the right as possible, as well as to bicyclists, some of whom ride so far right as to be in the gutter pan or in the area of the road in which motor vehicle tires throw debris. Defining those hazards and circumstances will improve the ability of drivers and bicyclists to share the road in a safe and courteous fashion by clarifying the expectations of each.

(6) Allows for a bicyclist to continue traveling straight when a right-turn lane is present.

(c) Local governments provide special event permits allowing bicyclists to ride more than two abreast during special events such as charity rides. This section recognizes such permits.

(d) and (e) Adds "bicycle" to "path" in order to distinguish them from multi-use paths, a more common facility type that does not create the same legal requirements for bicyclists.

(f) Some bicyclists are under the mistaken impression that riding against traffic provides greater safety as they are able to see traffic as it approaches them; however, biking against traffic is a dangerous way to ride and is strongly associated with bicycle crash predictors. Mandating this section will save lives when it is adopted by bicycle riders.

• **40-6-296 (a)** Riding at night does not have to be more dangerous than riding during the daytime. Bicycle crashes are more likely to occur after dark due to a lack of visibility. Many bicyclists currently use rear red lights in addition to reflectors. This section specifies that bicycles which do not have a rear reflector must have a rear red light.

(d) This section previously made recumbents, a bicycle type preferred by some older riders, illegal. Recumbent bicycles are cycles that place the rider in a seated position, with one's legs extended forward to reach the pedals. Recumbents can provide greater greater comfort and reduced stress on the back and other joints.

• **40-6-297** By deleting this section, it updates current law to authorize the sale of bicycles with clipless pedals. These types of pedals are used by bicyclists to increase efficiency and personal comfort and they do not have room for pedal reflectors. All higher-end bicycles that are manufactured and sold do not even come with pedals, as this allows the cyclist to choose a clipless pedal that best suits their needs. Bicycles sold with regular pedals contain built in reflectors.



*On behalf of Georgia Bikes! – georgiabikes.org
Contact: Emily Ham – emilyham@earthlink.net – 850.830.4482*