

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What is a Complete Street?*

Complete Streets are streets for everyone. They are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users. Pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities must be able to safely move along and across a complete street. Complete Streets make it easy to cross the street, walk to shops, and bicycle to work. They allow buses to run on time and make it safe for people to walk to and from destinations such as parks, etc.

2. *What does a Complete Street Look like?*

There is no singular design prescription for Complete Streets; each one is unique and responds to its community context. A complete street may include: sidewalks, bike lanes (or wide paved shoulders), shared parking and bike lanes, special bus lanes, comfortable and accessible public transportation stops, frequent and safe crossing opportunities, median islands, accessible pedestrian signals, curb extensions, narrower travel lanes, roundabouts, and more.

3. *What's a bike lane?*

A bike lane is a four to five-foot wide striped lane, marked with a large white bicycle on the pavement, and restricted to bicycle travel. On streets without parking, bike lanes appear along the curb. On streets with parking, bike lanes appear left of parked cars.

4. *In a bike lane, people on bikes don't have to think about cars, right?*

Wrong. When the bike lane stripe turns into a dotted line, it means motorists can cross the lane to make turns. Bike riders should hold their position in the lane, but be ready to slow down for motorists who don't yield.

5. *Where in the bike lane should people ride?*

Bicyclists should usually ride in the middle. But in a bike lane next to a line of parked cars, bicyclists should ride on the left side of the lane. That way, an opening car door won't hit them.

6. *Why have bike lanes?*

Bike lanes make the average person feel safer about biking on village streets. Bike lanes also cut down on weaving, making streets safer for everyone.



Figure 1 - Example of Bike Lane without parking

7. **What is a "shared lane for bike and parking"?**

When there is not sufficient room for parking lanes, bike lanes and travel lanes, a shared parking/bike lane is used. These are especially appropriate in residential suburban setting where parking lanes are much less utilized.

8. **Why are these markings on the street, what is their purpose?**

The principle behind "sharrows" is simple: to reinforce the existing rules of the road in order to create safer conditions for bicycling. In the absence of bicycle lanes on busy streets cyclists often ride too closely to parked cars. If somebody were to open a car door as a cyclist passed the cyclist could get "doored" and possibly get injured, perhaps seriously-especially if there was passing automobile traffic. Also, when cyclists stay far right in narrow travel lanes, passing motorists often don't see cyclists or pass too closely to them. This is not only unnerving for the cyclist, but it also leaves little margin for error.

9. **Why not just stripe bicycle lanes?**

We're using the sharrows in areas where there isn't enough room on the street for bicycle lanes. This is typically due to a high demand for on-street parking (as in the case for 167th Street), the inability to narrow the existing travel lanes, or a combination of the two. Sharrows are an effective, flexible alternative to striped bike lanes and can be used to improve cyclist safety and make needed connections in the bicycle route system.

10. **Why is the parking lane line missing?**

When a shared lane is used, a separate parking lane line is not appropriate because the parking lane and bike lanes are "shared" by both. The width is not sufficient for both and the spacing of the sharrow symbols demarcates the parking areas. The sharrow symbols also calms the traffic and encourages slower moving speeds.

11. **As a cyclist, what should I do in the presence of sharrows?**

We've placed the sharrows outside of the parked car's "door zone." Because the travel lane is too narrow for safe side-by-side travel by a motorist and a cyclist we expect cyclists to ride through the center of the sharrow, while still paying attention to potential door openings.

12. **As a motorist, what should I do in the presence of sharrows?**

Slow down and drive carefully. Because the travel lane is either too narrow or too busy for safe side-by-side travel by motorists and cyclists we expect motorists to slow down and either wait for the cyclist to turn off the roadway, or wait until you can pass safely. You probably won't have to wait long, and gunning it past a cyclist to save 30 seconds on your travel time isn't worth the risk of injuring someone!

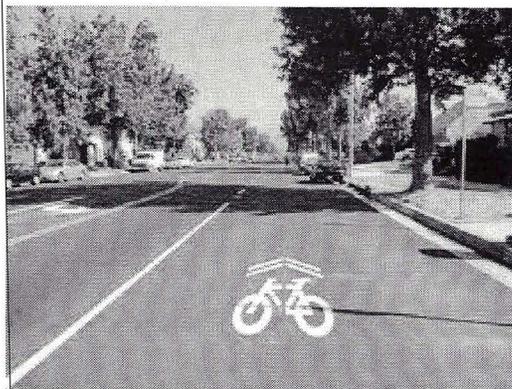


Figure 2 - Example of a "shared lane"

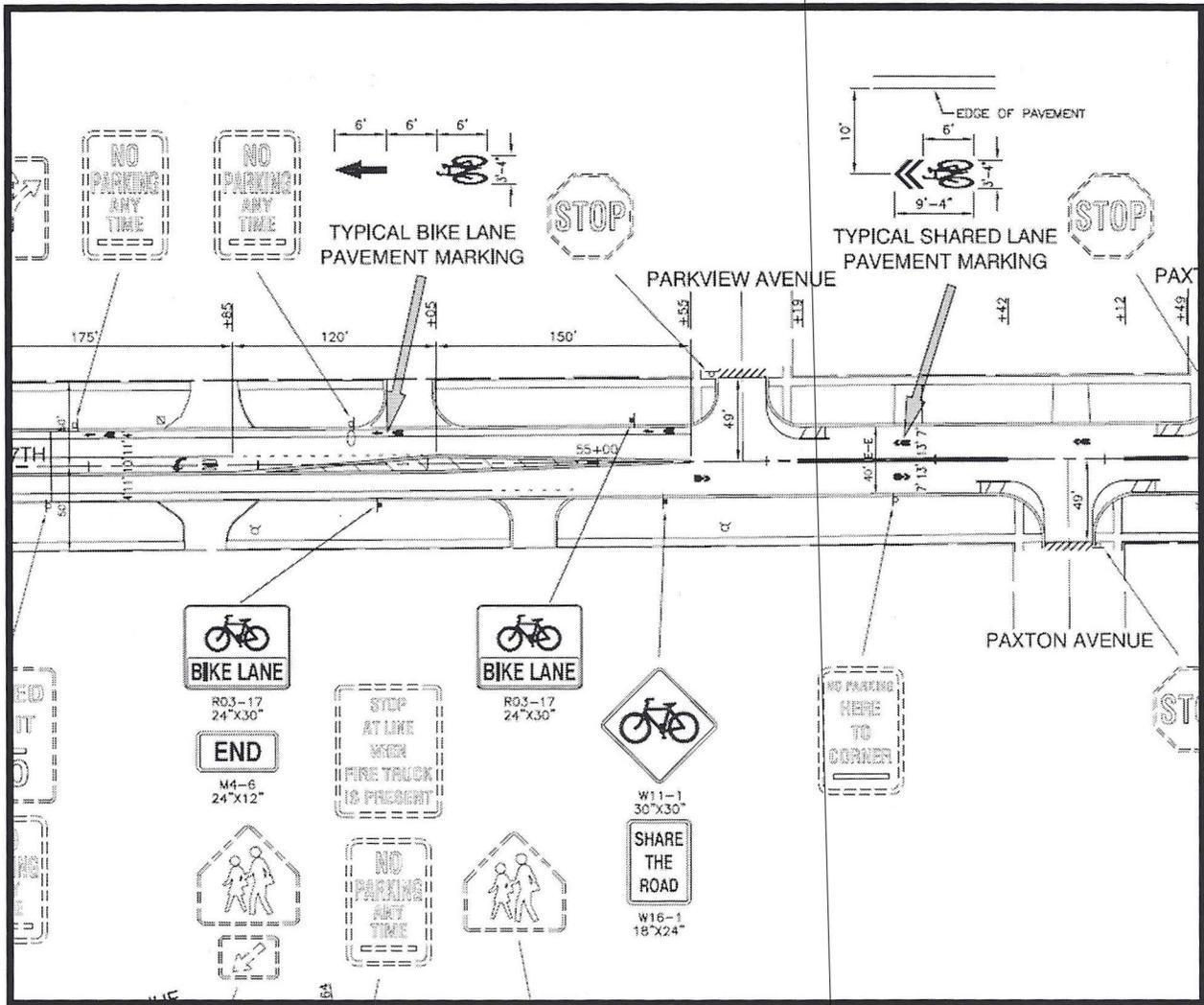


Figure 3 - Bike Lane and Shared Lane example