

# SHARED LANE MARKINGS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### What are Shared Lane Markings?

Shared Lane Markings (sometimes called “sharrows”) are street markings (as depicted on this page) that are installed in some locations on streets as an awareness tool to serve two main purposes:

- Provide guidance to bicyclists as to where they should ride on a shared roadway (i.e. away from the open door area of parked cars; not weaving in and out of traffic; riding with traffic, not against it; not riding on sidewalks, etc.)
- Alert motorists to the possible presence of bicyclists, set expectations as to where the bicyclists will be riding, and remind them “sharing the road” is the law



### Are Shared Lane Markings being installed in Colorado Springs? Where will they be installed?

The City would like to use Shared Lane Markings as another tool to improve bicycling and motorist safety and behavior. Currently, the City is working with interested stakeholders to develop a draft list of criteria to determine locations for initial locations where results could be observed and evaluated in consideration of additional installations, pending funding and resources. No locations have been finalized at this date. If you would like to be on the email list to receive updates and notification for upcoming public meetings, send an email to Mary Scott at [mscott@springsgov.com](mailto:mscott@springsgov.com).

### Do Shared Lane Markings establish a bike lane? Can I drive over them?

The markings do **NOT** establish a dedicated bike lane to be used for bicycling only. Bike lanes are separated from vehicular traffic with a solid white lane and denote an area where other vehicles cannot drive, park or stand. The new Shared Lane Markings are different – they are an awareness and guidance tool on some sections of road where bike lanes don’t exist. They do not change any laws for bicycling or driving behavior. You may still drive in that travel lane and the mark is simply a reminder that it is a shared travel lane and you should be alert for the potential presence of people cycling.

### What if I have to cross a double yellow line to pass a bicyclist riding in the pathway suggested by the Shared Lane Markings? Is that legal?

The Bicycle Safety Act was passed in Colorado in 2009. One of the provisions of the Act is that motorists may cross over a double yellow line to pass a bicyclist when it is safe to do so. Motorists are required by law to provide at least 3 feet of space between their vehicles and bicyclists (CRS 42 4 1003(b)).

### Many streets in Colorado Springs are shared by people driving and bicycling now but don’t have Shared Lane Markings. Why add Shared Lane Markings in some locations?

Many City streets carry low volumes of traffic with relatively slow speeds and pavement markings aren’t needed. The City is looking at installing shared lane markings on some streets where traffic is heavier, speeds may be higher, and/or the streets should be marked with bicycle lanes but cannot because of

demands for on-street parking or the number of travel lanes. They may also be installed on streets that already have bicycle lanes but there are gaps in the bicycle lane because of physical constraints. In those cases, the marks provide connectivity.

### **Why not just stripe bicycle lanes?**

Bicycle lanes are the City's preference if no other considerations existed. However, the City is using the Shared Lane Marking in some locations because there isn't enough room for bicycle lanes. This is typically because of a combination of a high demand for on-street parking and the inability to either eliminate a travel lane or narrow the existing travel lanes. It may also be physically too difficult or prohibitively expensive to widen the road to accommodate full bicycle lanes in some areas.

### **Why not just use Shared Lane Markings instead of bicycle lanes?**

The City of Colorado Springs still considers bicycle lanes to be the best treatment for improving travel conditions for bicycling on many streets, particularly streets with higher amounts of motor vehicle traffic and/or high travel speeds. Bicycle lanes are also part of the City's Street Design Standards for certain types of streets, which over time will lead to a more connected network of dedicated bicycle lanes as new streets are built and existing streets are rebuilt.

### **Why not put Shared Lane Markings on all busy streets?**

The City is looking at potentially using Shared Lane Markings to fill in relatively short gaps along bicycle lane corridors for connectivity and may also be trying them on some longer, busier corridors. Once installed in initial locations, the City can observe outcomes and then may expand the use of Shared Lane Markings to longer gaps on roadways that are regularly traveled by persons on bicycles or sections of road that help connect other bikeways together. Additionally, some busy streets have good parallel corridors that can be easily used by persons traveling by bicycle, so not all busy streets that lack bicycle lanes need to be marked with Shared Lane Markings. Shared Lane Markings are not permanent and can be removed if unintended consequences occur in certain locations.

### **What does the City hope to accomplish with the use of Shared Lane Markings?**

The City wants to create safer conditions for bicyclists on busy streets where we should have bicycle lanes but cannot. The Shared Lane Markings can help indicate better lane positioning for people riding bicycles, especially along streets with on-street parking where it is important to ride outside the "door zone" and to not weave in and out of parked cars. The Shared Lane Markings can also help improve the passing space between motorists and bicyclists.

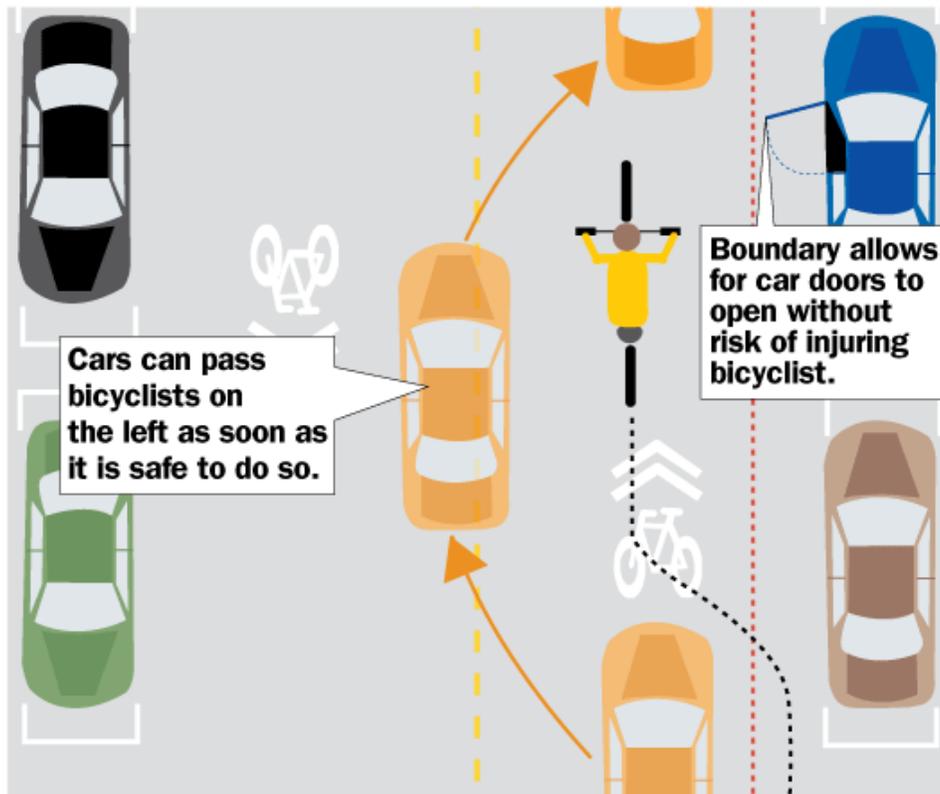
### **Do Shared Lane Markings work?**

There is substantial evidence throughout the United States that they do work. The introduction of the Shared Lane Marking, like any new sign or pavement marking to be used on public roadways, must undergo formal testing to determine if it is understandable to the traveling public and also effective. The Shared Lane Marking underwent several years of pilot testing in a number of communities around the United States before it was formally approved for use by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in late 2009. A 2003 study in San Francisco (one of the national test communities) showed that on streets marked with Shared Lane Markings, bicyclists rode further away from parked cars (outside the "door zone") and passing motorists provided more passing space between their vehicles and bicyclists than on streets without the markings. Other test communities showed similar results.

### As a person traveling by bicycle, what should I do in the presence of Shared Lane Markings?

Following the guidance provided by the FHWA's Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (which governs the use of all roadway signs and markings in the U.S.), when Shared Lane Markings are on streets with on-street parallel parking they are to be installed to direct bicyclists away from the parked car's "door zone". On streets without on-street parking, the Shared Lane Marking is installed a minimum of 4' from the curb or edge of roadway in the case of no curb. In both instances, the travel lane is too narrow for safe side-by-side travel by a motorist and a bicyclist, so the bicyclist should ride over the center of the Shared Lane Marking with the flow of traffic to best position themselves in the lane. Do not ride on the wrong side of the street against the flow of traffic.

Note: to make turns or ride around debris or other obstructions in the roadway, a bicyclist should signal and move to the appropriate part of the roadway for your maneuver. For example, do not make a left turn from the right travel lane of a four-lane roadway; move to the left travel lane or turn lane if provided to make your turn or cross as a pedestrian in the crosswalk and then reenter traffic. Also, you should never weave in and out of parked cars.



### As a motorist, what should I do when traveling on a road with Shared Lane Markings?

Because the travel lane is too narrow for safe side-by-side travel by motorists and bicyclists, motorists should wait until they can move into the adjacent travel lane to pass or slow down and wait until you have at least 3' feet of safe passing distance between you and the bicyclist.