

30: Signs and Markings

Bikeway signage and pavement markings indicate routes and provide navigation, safety, and security functions. Ideal systems are easily seen, on-street markings visible by both cyclists and drivers. Markings are used to indicate bicycle boulevards, to direct cyclists to major routes and paths, indicate route shifts, and alert driver to cyclists' expected presence.

SITUATION

- Used for regulations, information, and way finding
- Clustered signs often cluttered or invisible
- Markings are being used more often
- City of Portland installed new bike signs and markings

Signs and markings have a variety of uses in the transportation system. Regulatory signs inform roadway users of how they are supposed to behave in an area; informational signs and markings are intended to be useful to help users predict what to expect or where to find routes and places. However, roadway users often miss signs and too many signs creates “sign-clutter” and can overload roadway users.



For bicyclists, roadway markings have become common because they are easily seen by both bicyclist and motorist. For example, bike lanes have diamonds and images of cyclists. Portland in fact is known to have artistic and fun bike lane stencils.

The City of Portland recently replaced the old “bike route” sign system with signs that offer directions, times, and distance to major bike routes and destinations. They also added small white circle markings to identify bike routes; when a route changes, they have some added small pavement arrows.

PROBLEMS

- Public can not identify all bike routes
- Routes not marked to show turns and changes
- Many locations lack signage

Many bicycle routes are not clearly identifiable. It is important for the general public to recognize a bike routes so that they will drive cautiously and expect cyclists. It is also important for novice or interested cyclists to be able to clearly identify bike routes that are near their home. This will help attract new cyclists and help them have a safer more pleasant, and convenient bicycling experience.

Signage and markings are especially important at transitions. Many bike routes currently change streets, stray from an expected course, or just simply end. Bike route signs and markings are essential to help guide bicyclists through these circumstances. Oftentimes

this lack of signage, or concern about potentially getting lost will prevent a potential bicycle trip. For example, the route from Portland to Vancouver is so circuitous and potentially dangerous that many do not attempt it.

SOLUTIONS

- Use large pavement markings
- Focus on route changes
- Include destination based information
- Maintenance

Bike routes should be clearly marked with large and regular pavement stencils that clearly inform community members of the route. Stencils should be at least 4' x 8', have and have an image of a cyclist. Sharrow markings that include directional chevrons have been shown to be effective in helping bicyclists and motorists share busy roads. In Berkeley, large markings that include the words "Bicycle Boulevard" clearly denote this network of low-traffic streets. Berkeley also uses purple signs to identify routes. Blue bike lanes are also useful pavement markings that show conflict points.



Stencils are also very useful for signally route changes. Markings that showed route changes would add confidence to cyclists seeking to ride to new parts of town; regular markings along straight stretches would also help increase confidence. We prefer large pavement arrows or chevrons to route change, believing they would be much more visible than signs.

The City of Portland installed a set of new signs that successfully carry destination-based information. This information is useful to novice cyclists, because in addition to distance and direction, in offers a very conservative riding time estimate.

Maintenance is a key issue. A commitment to periodically repainting pavement markings is essential for them to retain their full usefulness. Signs and marking must be updated when routes are changed and added.

WHO TO CONTACT

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