

# Sharrows Program

The City of Winnipeg is introducing new cycling pavement markings known as “Sharrows” to promote cycling on routes that have wider curb lanes and are part of the City’s commuter cycling network. Bike to the Future is providing the following information to help cyclists and motorists better understand this new program.

The Sharrow program includes the installation of ‘Share the Road’ signs and ‘Sharrow’ pavement markings. Sharrow markings on the pavement are generally centered 0.75 -1 meters from the curb (preferably 1 meter) and are spaced at intervals of approximately 75 meters along the route. The symbols raise awareness to both cyclists and motorists of the correct cyclist positioning in the lane.

For cyclists, the symbols alert them to the identified commuter cycling route and provide more confidence to ride further from the curb by suggesting a proper riding position through the center of the sharrow while providing assurance that they have the right to be there. Bike to the Future's position on sharrow marking is that they should always be centered at least one meter from the curb in accordance with Canadian Cycling Association recommendations. Where the sharrows have been centered at less than the preferred 1 meter distance from the curb, cyclists should continue to ride one meter from the curb (to the left of the sharrows center) to maintain a safe riding position.

For motorists, the symbols are a reminder that cyclists may be present along the identified commuter cycling route and they can expect to encounter cyclists riding areas along these routes. Motorists need to be aware that cyclists may need to deviate from their expected positioning due to road condition, obstacles, puddles, or to pass parked cars. Where the width of the curb lane permits a safe passing distance along a sharrow route, motorists may be able to safely pass cyclists within the curb lane. However, motorists are reminded to exercise patience on these routes, as there may not always be sufficient space for both cars and bicycles to safely share a lane. As stated in the Highway Traffic Act, motorists “are required to provide a safe distance” (at least 1 meter) between themselves and cyclists when passing. This may require the driver to encroach into the adjacent lane when passing a cyclist, particularly drivers of larger vehicles (e.g. SUV’s, buses and trucks). In all cases motorists must maintain awareness and continue to use appropriate caution when passing cyclists.

If automobile parking or loading is permitted on a roadway marked with Sharrow markings, vehicles are permitted to park over top of the Sharrow markings. In these situations motorists are expected to park tight to the curb to maximize the space needed for a cyclist to ride beyond the door zone. Cyclists are reminded to always ride far enough to the left of parked vehicles to remain outside of the “door zone” and to avoid weaving in and out between parked cars. The “door zone” is the 1 meter area to the left of a parked vehicle where a cyclist could collide with an opening door..

## **Quick Facts about Sharrows...**

- Are located along Higgins Avenue, Roblin Boulevard, Grant Avenue, Regent Avenue, Plessis Road, Dakota Street, and Dunkirk Drive.
- Are centered 0.75 -1 meter from the curb.
- Are spaced at 75 meter intervals along designated commuter cycling routes.
- Promote commuter cycling through on-road infrastructure.
- Alert drivers to expect cyclists along the designated cycling route.
- The curb lanes widths vary and passing may not be possible within the curb lane.
- Drivers are expected to park tight to the curb when on street parking is permitted.

## **Information for Cyclists**

The markings identify commuter cycling route and should provide you with more confidence to ride further from the curb, and assurance that you have the right to be there. The center of the symbol gives a suggested riding position. The correct road position may vary with traffic volume and speed, conditions and width of road, weather and your skill level. You should always ride far enough out from the curb (1 meter minimum recommended) to provide sufficient room to manoeuver and avoid any hazards that might exist in the gutter.

## **Information for Motorists**

The symbols are a reminder that cyclists may be present along the identified commuter cycling route and they can be expect cyclists to be riding in those areas. Motorists need to be aware that cyclists may need to deviate from their expected positioning due to road condition, obstacles, puddles, or to pass parked cars. Vehicles are permitted to park over top of the Sharrow markings in cases when parking is permitted. In these situations motorists are expected to park tight to the curb to maximize the space needed for a cyclist outside the door zone. The “door zone” is the area to the left of a parked vehicle where a cyclist could be contacted by an opening door.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Which streets in Winnipeg have Sharrows?**

**A.** Higgins Avenue, Roblin Boulevard, Grant Avenue, Regent Avenue, Plessis Road, Dakota Street, and Dunkirk Drive.

### **Q. What is the purpose of the sharrow marking?**

**A.** This “Shared Lane Marking” is intended to inform cyclists and motorists where a travel lane may be shared by both modes provided there is sufficient width. It has been shown to be helpful in situations where motorists may squeeze cyclists against the curb, where it may not be obvious where cyclists should be riding, such as intersections with multiple turn lanes.

### **Q. What are the advantages of using the shared lane marking?**

**A.** The shared lane markings can have a positive influence on motorist and cyclist behavior, positions, and safety. Shared lane markings reduce wrong-way riding and sidewalk riding. The bike-and-chevron marking has a strong impact on motorist positioning resulting in more separation and hence greater comfort for cyclists.

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

**A.** Watch for cyclists. Slow down and drive carefully. Because the travel lane may be too narrow for safe side-by-side travel by motorists and cyclists, motorists should evaluate the situation and pass only when it is safe to do so and providing a minimum of 1 meter of clearance between the vehicle and the cyclist.

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

**A.** The center of the symbol gives a suggested riding position. The recommended position however is a minimum of 1 meter from the curb or edge of road and will vary as well with traffic volume and speed, conditions, weather, and your skill level. You should always ride far enough out from the curb to maintain a straight line of travel and avoid any hazards that might exist in the gutter.

### **Q. Can I park over top of sharrow marking when parking is permitted?**

**A.** Yes. When parking along sharrow routes, motorists should park tight to the curb to maximize the cyclist space outside the vehicle door zone.

### **Q. If I see sharrows in a lane, is the lane only for bikes?**

**A.** No. Sharrows are used in lanes shared by bicyclists and motorists when there is not sufficient width for a bike lane. In contrast, bike lanes set aside a pavement area for bicyclists and are marked by a solid white line and a different symbol.

### **Q. But on some streets, cyclists riding over the sharrows will take the entire lane. Aren't they supposed to move to the right?**

**A.** Not always. According to the Highway Traffic Act cyclists must stay to the right *except* to pass other cyclists or vehicles, to prepare to make a left turn, or when necessary to avoid conditions that make it unsafe to continue along the right. Such conditions include fixed or moving objects and surface hazards. Moving to the left in the lane to avoid car doors, for instance, even if it means taking the entire lane, is permitted by the Highway Traffic Act.

### **Q. I've never seen these sharrows before. Why are they being used now?**

**A.** These markings will be used primarily on streets designated as part of the Winnipeg commuter cycling Network, particularly on streets that form a crucial link but do not have sufficient street width to allow for bike lanes without taking away a full vehicle lane.