

Sharrows.....Now on the Streets of Moses Lake



The Trails Planning Team (TPT) has been promoting a healthy lifestyle through safe pedestrian and bicycle routes in and around the community of Moses Lake since 2001. In 2002, the TPT produced a Master Plan for routes, trails, and paths. The Trails Planning Team identified several routes that would benefit from the use of sharrows to improve bicycle riding for health,

The City of Moses Lake will repaint the sharrows on portions 3rd Avenue, 4th Avenue, and Balsam Street to connect the bike lanes on Broadway Avenue to the bike lanes on East Broadway as well as installing them on Grape Drive between Highway 17 and Valley Road. Sharrows provide visual identification for drivers that indicate bicyclists may be present. They also

reinforce the legitimacy of bicycle traffic on the street. Sharrows are a safe economical way for both cyclists and motor vehicles to share the road.

1. What is a shared lane pavement marking or “sharrow”?

Sharrow is short-form for “shared lane pavement marking”. This pavement marking includes a bicycle symbol and two white chevrons.

2. What do these sharrow markings mean for cyclists?

Sharrows are used to indicate where cyclists should ride in a travel lane.

- For safety reasons, cyclists should ride three feet from the curb to avoid debris and catch basin grates.
- In lanes that are too narrow for cyclists and motorists to travel side-by-side, cyclists should ride in the center of the lane to discourage motorists from passing too closely.
- Where there is on-street parking, cyclists should ride three feet from parked cars to avoid the “door zone”.

Although it is the motorist’s and/or passenger’s responsibility to look first before opening their door, riding too close to parked cars can lead to serious injuries that can be avoided.

Sharrows are also used through intersections and some merge zones to support straight-line cycling and to increase the visibility of cyclists.

3. What do these sharrow markings mean for motorists?

Sharrow markings are used to remind drivers to share the road with cyclists. Sharing the road means you should:

- only pass a cyclist where there is enough room to do so safely (at least three feet between motorist and cyclist),
- reduce your speed when passing a cyclist, and
- watch for cyclists when making lane changes and turns.

What do these sharrows mean for motorists? (cont.)

Be aware that cyclists are vulnerable to different hazards than drivers (e.g. minor pot holes and debris), so give them space to maneuver. Even where there are no sharrows or bike lanes, motorists should always share the road.

4. How are sharrows different from a bike lane?

Bike lanes are a dedicated space for cyclists where motorists are not allowed to park, stop or drive. Bike lanes are painted on the road with bicycle symbols and a solid white line.

In comparison, sharrows are used in lanes that are *shared* by motorists and cyclists. Travel lanes with sharrows do not have a separate white line indicating a dedicated cycling area. Instead, chevrons and a bicycle symbol are used to indicate where cyclists should ride, and where motorists should expect to see cyclists.

5. If I see these sharrows markings, is the lane for bikes only?

No. Sharrows are used to identify lanes that are shared by motorists and cyclists.

6. Why not just stripe bike lanes instead of sharrows on city streets?

Bicycle lanes are preferred to sharrows as a bikeway design treatment, but not all streets have enough room for bicycle lanes due to high demand for on-street parking and/or the inability to eliminate or narrow regular traffic lanes. As a general principle, widening roads to provide bike lanes is not practical in the downtown core or in residential areas. However, on some roadways, minor widening may be feasible at the time of reconstruction. On some streets where bicycle lanes cannot be accommodated, the City may be using sharrows instead.

7. Why is the City painting these sharrows markings on our roadways?

The City is working to improve cycling conditions, and sharrows are one way to encourage more people to consider cycling as a safe, effective method of travel.



For more information call 764-3805.