



MEMORANDUM

TO: Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Members

FROM: Sophie Stimson, Senior Planner
Public Works Transportation

DATE: July 18, 2013

SUBJECT: Sharrows

As you know, the Northeast Neighborhood Association is collaborating with the City on the construction of a pathway on Puget Street for one block from Miller to Jasper. As part of the pathway project, the neighborhood also proposes signs and markings for bicyclists along Puget Street for the five blocks from San Francisco to the beginning of the path at Miller.

The neighborhood's intent is that signs and sharrow markings will raise bicyclist awareness of this Puget Street route. Puget Street is a low-vehicle volume local access street. Puget parallels Bethel Street, a higher vehicle volume major collector street without bike lanes. Bicyclists could choose to travel on Puget Street in the north and south direction, as a partial parallel route alternative to Bethel Street.

During the discussion of the pathway construction, staff and BPAC decided to separate the discussion of the use of sharrows markings along Puget Street and address these markings independent of the pathway.

In preparation for the planned BPAC discussion of sharrows on Puget Street, staff drafted a white paper on sharrows, including how they are used nationwide, and what we believe is the appropriate application of sharrows in Olympia. The City uses sharrows in two applications: 1) to connect short missing links in the bike lane network where no facility is possible, or 2) for the downhill section of street with bike lanes in the uphill direction. Staff recommends limiting the use of sharrows to the two current applications where they are needed to raise driver awareness of the lack of a bike lane on higher volume streets.

At the July 24 meeting, we will be recommending to BPAC that we not use sharrows as a wayfinding tool on Puget from San Francisco to Miller. Providing an alternative to Bethel Street is a valuable improvement for bicyclists. Directional signing can be added to reinforce this route.

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The use of sharrows in this manner, as a wayfinding tool, is inconsistent with the City's practice for the use of sharrows. Should sharrows be used as a wayfinding tool, there would be numerous routes on low volume streets that would be candidates for these markings. A large number of these marking would require resources to maintain. Use of sharrows in multiple different applications on our streets reduces their effectiveness in any one application.

If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (360) 753-8497 or via email at sstimson@ci.olympia.wa.us.

SS:ci

SS071813BPAC(Sharrows)

cc: Michelle Swanson
Peter Guttchen, Northeast Neighborhood Association