

Amy Harvey

From: Jeanette Coffin
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:48 PM
To: wpein@nc.rr.com
Cc: Colleen Willger; Phillip Fleischmann; Lance Norris; Adam Searing; Amy Ryan; Camille Berry; Jeanne Brown; Jess Anderson; Karen Stegman; Michael Parker; Pam Hemminger; Paris Miller-Foushee; Tai Huynh; Amy Harvey; Ann Anderson; Carolyn Worsley; Laura Selmer; Loryn Clark; Mary Jane Nirdlinger; Maurice Jones; Rae Buckley; Ran Northam; Ross Tompkins; Sabrina Oliver
Subject: FW: Door Zone Bike Lane on Country Club Road
Attachments: Door Zone.pdf

Thank you for your correspondence with the Town of Chapel Hill. The Mayor and Town Council are interested in what you have to say. By way of this email, I am forwarding your message to the Mayor and each of the Council Members, as well as to the appropriate staff person who may be able to assist in providing additional information or otherwise addressing your concerns.

Again, thank you for your message.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Coffin

Jeanette Coffin
Office Assistant
Town of Chapel Hill Manager's Office
405 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Chapel Hill, NC 27514
(o) 919-968-2743 | (f) 919-969-2063

-----Original Message-----

From: Wayne Pein <wpein@nc.rr.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 16, 2022 2:29 PM
To: Town Council <mayorandcouncil@townofchapelhill.org>
Subject: Door Zone Bike Lane on Country Club Road

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Dear Mayor and Council,

The recent Dooring fatality on W. Franklin St. sheds light on related dangerous bicycling pavement markings.

Petition: Overhaul the Door Zone Bike Lane on Country Club Road and correctly place Shared Lane Markings as described in the attached paper.

Regards,
Wayne Pein
204 Ridgecrest Drive

Door Zone Bike Lane on Country Club Road and misplaced Shared Lane Markings



Wayne Pein

wpein@nc.rr.com

February 16, 2022

Introduction

Bicycling (or motoring) within the Door Zone of parallel parked vehicles is unsafe at any speed. There isn't sufficient time to avoid a suddenly opened door impact. The bicyclist recently killed in a Dooring collision on West Franklin Street was estimated by police to be going 10 mph.

Risk of being Doored is not the only reason bicyclists should avoid the Door Zone.

Operating close to a wall of parked vehicles makes bicyclists less visible because they visually blend with the vehicles and because they are visual obstructions at driveways. Obscured pedestrians emerging from between parked vehicles are a hazard. Operating close to parked vehicles enables and invites overtaking motorists into the bicyclist's lane space, creating a sideswipe hazard and visual obstruction on the bicyclist's left. Moreover, bicyclists who strike an opened door are flung leftward into the lane, vulnerable to being struck by passing traffic.¹

Drivers of wide vehicles and motorcyclists avoid the Door Zone. The NCDOT *Motorcyclists' Handbook*² says,

“When passing parked cars, stay toward the left of your lane. You can avoid problems caused by doors opening, drivers getting out of cars, or people stepping from between cars”.

Note that motorcyclists' travel lane is 10–12' wide.

Bicyclists have been conditioned to ride far right in the travel lane by “Far To Right” laws³, motorist or law enforcement coercion⁴, poorly placed Shared Lane Markings⁵, emulating other bicyclists, or by erroneous education. They may be motivated by wanting to avoid harassment from slowed motorists, appear cooperative, or to seek what they believe is a safe space. But operating at the far right enables and encourages motorists to enter their lane space, and makes bicyclists more vulnerable to Dooring, Drive Out, Left Cross, Right Hook, and Sideswipe type collisions.

The 2012 AASHTO Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities says,

“The minimum operating width of 4 ft (1.2 m), sufficient to accommodate forward movement by most bicyclists, is greater than the physical width momentarily occupied by a rider because of natural side-to-side movement that varies with speed, wind, and bicyclist proficiency. Additional operating width may be needed in some situations, such as on steep grades, and the figure does not include shy distances from parallel objects such as railings, tunnel walls, curbs, or parked cars.”

A February 9, 2022 article⁶ in the News and Observer discussing the West Franklin Street Dooring fatality contains a short general list “What Can Towns Do?” to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

A crucial missed item in that tally is that municipal and state governments should not create dangerous or misleading bicycling treatments.

Bike Lanes placed within the Door Zone of on-street parallel parking are overtly dangerous infrastructure. Shared Lane Markings in the Door Zone promote miseducation and are patently dangerous if ridden over as intended.

The facility on Country Club Road is a Door Zone Bike Lane. Poorly placed Shared Lane Markings are on at least 3 different Chapel Hill roads. There exist other unacceptable, dangerous treatments.



Image 1. The parking lane on Country Club Road is 8' wide, the Door Zone Bike Lane is 6', and the travel lane is just 10'.

Parked vehicles can abut the parking limit line. Opened doors can extend 3.5', leaving just 2.5' of Bike Lane clear space. Bicyclists are 2.5' wide but need 4' of clear operating space plus shy distances. Trucks, buses, and landscape trailers are 8.5' wide not including mirrors, and can abut the Bike Lane.

This design is fatally flawed. Bicyclists should not have to tightrope, staying far left in the Bike Lane to defend against opened doors on their right while being skimmed on the left by close passing motor vehicles.



Image 2. A random bicyclist within the Door Zone.

Bicyclists are shepherded into the Bike Lane, while motorists are kept out of the Door Zone by the Bike Lane.



Image 3. Rather than a Bike Lane, it should be a buffer showing the area to avoid.

The Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) says, “CROSS-HATCHED (diagonal) lines mark pavement areas where driving is discouraged, such as gore areas, painted medians, obstructions in the roadway, and other “safety zones.”



Image 4. Shared Lane Marking in the Door Zone on Ridge Road.

This and similar others are willful miseducation; they should be at lane center.



Image 5. Shared Lane Marking placed too close behind angled parking on Ridge Road.

Bicyclists riding over the markings are screened and vulnerable to backing vehicles.

Notes

1. Dooring mechanism. www.youtube.com/watch?v=CudJvSbS2aY
2. <https://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-licenses/new-drivers/Documents/motorcyclist-handbook.pdf>
3. Chapel Hill had a bicyclist specific "Far To Right" ordinance 21-43(c) until 6/8/15. It was applicable only on Town maintained roads, but was sometimes enforced on State roads. I was given a citation on 3/27/11 on MLK Jr. Blvd. 12/3/12. I petitioned the Town Council to repeal 21-43c, but was stonewalled by the Town Manager and Staff until 6/8/15.
4. Twenty or so years ago at nearly the exact same location as the recent West Franklin Street fatality a Chapel Hill police officer angrily pulled me over and said I had to ride closer to the parked cars. I told him I didn't have to, would not, and why.
5. In November 2016 I informed former traffic engineer Kumar Nepali that the SLMs on Ridge Road were misplaced. In an email thread I have retained he said they would be ground off and replaced spring of 2017. That never happened.

SLMs have twice been misplaced far right like a faux bike lane on MLK Jr. Blvd despite my targeted warnings against this placement. Summer 2008 they were misplaced a substandard 22" on-center from the gutter pan seam. In March 2011 MLK Jr. Blvd was resurfaced and the SLMs were placed 24" from the gutter pan seam, the MUTCD minimum but clearly ill advised given the context and evaluation results. This was done by Town of Chapel Hill transportation staff even though they were informed by me that the placement was dangerous and UNC's evaluation report fatally flawed. Email records also show that the SLMs were placed before Town advisory boards had given their opinions, and that my critique was not given to the BiPed Board as I had requested. <https://bicyclingmatters.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/critique-of-eval-of-slms.pdf>

Columbia Street at South Road also has misplaced Shared Lane Markings. <https://bicyclingmatters.files.wordpress.com/2010/09/the-bl-on-so-columbia-st3.pdf>

6. News and Observer article. https://www.newsobserver.com/news/local/counties/orange-county/article258166743.html?fbclid=IwAR3XaiMC-7UmSPzJtUICKS_S4sQTY97lp7_HP9HoN11dnZENj8SN5ZJVpUU