



MIAMIBEACH

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PRESS RELEASE

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Bicycles and Vehicles Share a Lane on Washington Avenue

Miami Beach, FL -- If you're driving your vehicle down Washington Avenue, please beware that bicyclists will also be sharing the road. The City of Miami Beach is implementing a bike safety program that encourages bicyclists to ride on the road rather than the sidewalk and outside the car door zone.

The project calls for the restriping of the outside travel lanes (adjacent to the parking lane) on Washington Avenue from South Pointe Drive to Dade Boulevard. The new pavement markings notify motorists that they must share the road with bicyclists.

As cycling becomes a popular means of transportation in urban areas, it is important that everyone learns how to safely share the road.

"One of the most common causes of injury to bicyclists in Miami Beach is a crash involving a car door opening in the parking lane into a bicyclist," said Christina Bettin, transportation coordinator, City of Miami Beach. "By traveling in a shared lane, the cyclist is potentially out of danger."

Between 1996 and 2003, South Beach led Miami-Dade County in bicycle-related crashes with 446 accidents, which included two fatalities and incapacitated 55. In 2008, Florida led the country in bicyclists' fatalities where 4.2 percent of all traffic fatalities involved a cyclist death.

In Florida, a bicycle is classified as a vehicle; therefore, cyclists must follow both traffic rules that motorists must and those regulations adopted specially for cyclists. Both motorists and cyclists need to follow traffic signs, signals and lane markings. When cycling in the street, cyclists must ride in the same direction as traffic and use a front light when riding after dusk.

Motorists are also required to allow at least three feet clearance when passing a bicyclist on the road and must yield to cyclists at intersections and as directed by signs and signals.

Bicycle transportation not only helps to reduce vehicle emissions but increases road and parking capacity. The City's Public Works Department continues to add bike lanes and markings to many street improvement projects citywide to enhance its transportation system.

The Washington Avenue shared lanes will be studied for effectiveness in mid-February; and, if found successful, shared lanes will expand to other streets.

Washington Avenue from 4 to 17 streets will soon have bike racks on every block and bicycle sharing/rental stations (eg. Deco Bike) throughout the corridor.

For more information on bicycle transportation, contact the Public Works Department at 305.673.7080

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