



## Riding Wide/Narrow Lanes (Traffic Dynamics)

For a cyclist one of the most frightening situations is when we are confronted with a restricted lane width. This can simply be a narrowing or complete elimination of a shoulder. Most multi-lane roadways are increasingly designed and marked so that the rightmost lane is wider than the remaining lanes. This gives cyclists and pedestrians space to use the road safely, but what happens if that safe space disappears?

In these situations, your first considerations should be:

- Your skills as a rider.
- Traffic volume and your relative speed.
- Condition of the road
- Weather/light conditions

**Skills** If you are a confident, powerful bike handler able to sustain 30 kph it is a far different situation than a new rider who struggles to sustain 20 kph and is yet to have learned good bike handling skills.

**Traffic Volume and Speed** Riding through an urban construction zone with speeds reduced to 30 to 50 kph is far different than construction zones on a major highway where speeds may only be reduced to 70 to 90 kph. Your speed relative to the motor vehicle speed is critical. In addition, if volume is high then sightlines for motorists are restricted. If you are able to sustain a speed within 20 kph of the posted limit in light volume, then you can contemplate taking the lane and riding through with other road users.

**Road Conditions** If road conditions are rough with large potholes, plates and cracks then everyone has to slow down, but are you still able to maintain near the same speed as vehicles with suspension?

**Weather and Light Conditions** These conditions are a test for all road users - but remaining visible for a cyclist is especially challenging. Motorists have restricted vision with their roof structure and the possibility of muddy or snow covered glass. Consider using front and back flashing lights – even in daylight conditions.

Assessing the situation against your confidence, speed and bike handling skills is something only you can do. In low volume situations drivers are generally quite understanding and patient. Be sure to stay in the right-most lane and take the lane by signalling and moving left, when safe to do so, into the centre of that right-most lane. If you fail to take the lane, then some drivers may be tempted to thread-the-needle and squeeze between you and the adjacent lane of traffic.

Options include detouring the section or riding/walking through the section if there is a safe path through the closed-off area of the restriction. Remember - Heavy Equipment Operators have very limited sightlines close to their machines and it's best to seek permission to enter the construction area.

