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News Release

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For Immediate Release: July 27, 2016

Share! #Durham installs new “contra-flow” pavement markings on Watts Street to improve bicyclist safety

Durham Installs New Pavement Markings in Trinity Park to Improve Bicyclist Safety

New Contra-Flow Bicycle Lane a First for Durham

DURHAM, N.C. – Those who regularly use Watts Street will now notice new pavement markings designed to make traveling by bicycle safer.

Last week, the City of Durham Transportation Department installed a contra-flow bicycle lane on Watts Street between West Trinity Avenue and Lamond Avenue. The purpose of the new pavement markings is to improve bicycle transportation and reduce wrong-way motor vehicle traffic by allowing bicyclists to travel southbound on Watts Street while continuing to restrict southbound travel for motor vehicles.

According to Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Planner [Bryan Poole](#) with the City’s Transportation Department, this project addresses several issues in this neighborhood. “The new pavement markings remove confusion for bicyclists about the legality of travelling against traffic toward downtown, address a safety issue of cars travelling the wrong way, and illustrate how roads can be restriped to promote the sharing of road space for different modes of transportation.”

While this type of road design has been implemented in other cities, such as Washington, D.C. and Baltimore, Md., this is the first time it is being used in Durham. For the length of the project, parking on both sides of the street is now designated with a solid white line. The northbound travel lane is 10.5-foot wide and includes shared bicycle lane markings with a 4.5-foot wide southbound bicycle lane marked with yellow-dashed striping for bicyclists traveling south.

Signage now indicates that travel northbound is limited to one-way motor vehicle traffic except for bicyclists. The striping and signage have been installed and final pavement markings will be completed this week. This project did not involve any widening of the pavement or changes in the locations of curbs.

According to Poole, this portion of Watts Street was chosen for this type of bike lane for two reasons. “Even with signage and other markings, residents along Watts Street informed us that cars were turning south on this section and heading in the wrong direction,” Poole said. “Also, a high number of bicyclists already use the street and were either turning off or illegally going against traffic heading south. We realized the road width would allow for parking on both sides of the street as well as a shared northbound travel lane and exclusive southbound bicycle lane.”

These improvements are not directly related to a broader bicycle boulevard network. However, the City’s Transportation Department is beginning to identify, evaluate, and plan a prioritized low-stress bicycle network along residential streets as part of the current [bicycle and pedestrian plan update](#). As the bicycle boulevard network plan develops, there will be future opportunities for residents to comment on the route and design options prior to implementation.

For more information about this project or the bicycle and pedestrian plan update, contact Poole at (919)-560-4366, extension 36423 or by [email](#).

About the City of Durham Transportation Department

The [Transportation Department](#) is responsible for a broad range of transportation services, which include traffic signs and signals, transportation planning, parking operations, street lighting, taxicab administration, and bicycle and pedestrian planning. The department also oversees [GoDurham](#) and [GoDurham ACCESS](#) as well as leads planning functions for the [Durham-Chapel Hill-Carrboro Metropolitan Planning Organization \(DCHC MPO\), which is the regional organization that is responsible for planning and programming state and federal transportation projects in the urbanized areas of Durham, Orange, and Chatham counties](#).

Guided by the City’s [Strategic Plan](#), the department helps to strengthen the foundation, enhance the value, and improve the quality and sustainability of neighborhoods that are necessary for a strong and diverse community.

[Bike Lane Image 1](#)

[Bike Lane Image 2](#)

[Bike Lane Image 3](#)