NOTE: This is a recommendation by NCUTCD to FHWA to add or revise the content of the MUTCD. This proposal by itself does not constitute official standards or guidance. Regardless of NCUTCD approval status, any proposed change or revision has no legal or official status until specifically approved by FHWA through either the Interim Approval process or adoption into a new edition of the MUTCD.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE: Bicycle Technical Committee

TOPIC: Bicycle Lane Markings - Clarification

STATUS/DATE OF ACTION:
BTC Drafts: 01/19/2011 (version 1.0)
BTC Approval: 01/19/2011
MTC Concurrence: 01/20/2011
Transmitted to Sponsors: 01/21/2011
TC Revision: 06/22/2011 (no changes)
Council Approval: 06/23/2011

ORIGIN OF REQUEST: NCUTCD Bicycle Technical Committee (BTC)

AFFECTED SECTIONS OF MUTCD: Section 9C.04 - Markings for Bicycle Lanes

SUMMARY:
This proposal revises Section 9C.04 - Markings For Bicycle Lanes to be consistent with Section 3D.01 - Preferential Lane Word and Symbol Markings.

DISCUSSION
The current Standard text in Section 3D.01 notes that preferential lane word and symbol markings shall be used to assign a lane full or part time to a particular class or classes of vehicles. The Standard in Section 9C.04, Markings for Bicycle Lanes, only references the use of longitudinal pavement markings to define bicycle lanes. Section 9C.04 as currently worded could be misinterpreted as not requiring the use of word or symbol markings. This could result in bike lanes without any markings other than a longitudinal line. This could also result in shoulders without markings being erroneously considered to be bicycle lanes, which could have significant legal, operational, and risk management impacts.

This proposed text aligns the Standard in Section 9C.04 with the Standard in 3D.01.
These proposed changes were also reviewed and endorsed by the NCUTCD Markings Technical Committee at their meeting in January 2011.

RECOMMENDED MUTCD REVISIONS

Note: Deletions from the 2009 MUTCD text are noted in strikethrough red, and insertions in underline blue.

Paragraphs 01-05 of Section 9C.04 of the MUTCD are revised as follows:

Section 9C.04 Markings For Bicycle Lanes

Support:

01 Pavement markings designate that portion of the roadway for preferential use by bicyclists (see section 3D.01). Markings inform all road users of the restricted nature of the bicycle lane.

Standard:

02 Longitudinal pavement markings and bicycle lane symbol or word markings (see Figure 9C-3) shall be used to define bicycle lanes.

Guidance:

03 If used, the first bicycle lane symbol or word, symbol and/or arrow markings (see Figure 9C-3)—in a bicycle lane—should be placed at the beginning of a the bicycle lane and the downstream symbol or word markings should be placed at periodic intervals along the bicycle lane based on engineering judgment.

Standard:

04 If the bicycle lane symbol marking is used in conjunction with word or arrow messages, it shall precede them.

Option:

04 An arrow marking (see Figure 9C-3) may be used in conjunction with the bicycle lane symbol or word marking, placed downstream from the symbol or word marking.

05 If the word, symbol, and/or arrow pavement markings shown in Figure 9C-3 Where the bicycle lane symbol or word markings are used, Bike Lane signs (see Section 9B.04) may also be used, but to avoid overuse of the signs not necessarily adjacent to every set of pavement markings.