



# Contraflow Bicycle Lane



## DESCRIPTION

- A contraflow bicycle lane provides bicyclists a dedicated space in which to ride in the opposite direction of motor vehicle traffic on a one-way street.
- Contraflow lanes may include horizontal or vertical separation, like buffered or separated bicycle lanes, or they may resemble traditional bicycle lanes with simple pavement markings and signing. Parallel yellow stripes are typically used to designate the lane.
- Bicyclists should use a contraflow bicycle lane the same way they would use a traditional, buffered, or separated bicycle lane, the only difference being that they will be traveling against motor vehicle traffic.

## CONTEXT

- Contraflow bicycle lanes are most appropriate on low speed, low volume one-way streets unless further separation can be provided.
- A contraflow bicycle lane may be installed on streets with large numbers of bicyclists riding the wrong way or where the bicycle network could benefit from safer or more direct routes.
- Contraflow bicycle lanes are most successful on streets with few intersecting access points and where bicyclists can safely transition to other infrastructure at the end of the contraflow lane.

## BENEFITS

- ✓ **Improved safety**
- ✓ **Improved comfort**
- ✓ **Traffic compliance**
- ✓ **Increased efficiency**
- ✓ **Safer speeds**



## POLICY AND DESIGN GUIDANCE

- Wider bicycle lanes provide higher levels of capacity and comfort and they facilitate safer passing and side-by-side riding without needing to leave the bicycle lane.
- Contraflow bicycle lanes should be positioned on the right side of the road (from the perspective of the bicyclist).
- A solid double yellow line is often used to demarcate the lane. If wide enough, the buffer should include interior diagonal cross hatching or chevron markings. In some cases, the buffer area may include vertical separation elements, such as medians or flex posts.
- Bicycle lane pavement markings should be periodically stenciled in the bicycle lane, especially following intersections.
- "ONE WAY" or "DO NOT ENTER" signs should be supplemented with plaques reading "EXCEPT BIKES" to alert both drivers and bicyclists of the presence of opposing traffic.
- Contraflow bicycle lanes typically cost \$85,000-\$320,000 per mile (high end assumes continuous application of green pavement markings in conflict areas).

For more information on **Contraflow Bicycle Lanes** and other bicycle and pedestrian treatments, visit [virginiadot.org/programs/bikeped/bicycle\\_and\\_pedestrian\\_treatments.asp](http://virginiadot.org/programs/bikeped/bicycle_and_pedestrian_treatments.asp)

## RESOURCES

Legal definitions and regulations:

[Code of Virginia](#)

Treatment applications and general design guidance:

[NACTO](#)

[AASHTO](#)

Geometric design guidance for Virginia:

[VDOT Road Design Manual](#)

Pavement markings, placement, and spacing:

[MUTCD](#)

[VDOT 2016 Road and Bridge Standards](#)

[Virginia Supplement to the MUTCD](#)

Guidelines are provided for informational purposes only. For detailed design guidance, please refer directly to design manuals and standards.