New Laws Govern Bicycling

You must slow down and allow at least 3 feet when passing a bicycle. Bicyclists may ride in the middle of a narrow lane. These WV laws became effective last month. (17C-7-3, 17C-11-5)

For decades, the law has said that bicyclists have the same rights as motorists and must obey the same laws. (17C-11-2)

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, a lane must be at least 14 feet wide for a car to safely pass a bicycle without leaving the lane. None of the lanes around here are that wide.

Many cyclists ride as far to the right as possible, even in narrow lanes. This can lead motorists to pass even in the face of on-coming traffic. Then, either the on-coming motorist or the bicyclist gets run off the road.

Defensive driving for bicyclists dictates that cyclists ride near the middle of narrow lanes so motorists can see that it is unsafe to pass until the adjacent lane is clear.

When overtaking a cyclist, wait until the road ahead is clear and change lanes to pass. That might cost you a few seconds but could save a life and restore some civility to our society.

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Morgantown Municipal Bicycle Board

Here’s a graphic that would be good to include in the letter if you find that you have space.



It’s an R4-11 sign that is authorized by the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices recently adopted by WV. The Morgantown Monongalia Long Range Transportation Plan and the Greater Morgantown Bicycle Plan call for these signs to be installed around Morgantown when the plans are implemented.