

Honolulu is Getting its First Protected Bike Lane on King Street—Here's What You Need to Know

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Cyclists, drivers and pedestrians: Here's everything you need to know to safely navigate King Street's new cycle track.

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Photo: Ambika Castle

Did you know? 2.4 percent of Honolulu residents report commuting by bike, the ninth highest rate of any U.S. city.

Despite Honolulu's beautiful weather and mostly flat terrain, the city isn't exactly a cycling paradise. In fact, we rank 40th in the nation in the League of American Bicyclists' bike-friendly-state rankings.

Thanks to a recent declaration from Mayor Kirk Caldwell, that might be changing. In case you haven't noticed the bright splashes of green at every intersection on King Street, Honolulu is getting its first cycle track. It'll occupy the left-hand traffic lane of King Street, from Alapa'i to Isenberg. This luxurious lane will be 10 feet wide and protected from traffic by asphalt berms, delineators and parked cars. Construction began in September and should be done before the year is up (maybe even earlier).

The lane is built to the latest design standards, but it's going to take some work on the part of all road users to keep traffic running smoothly. Here's what you need to know:

Cyclists

1. Although the cycle track separates you from moving traffic, you're still **on the road**. Watch for cars pulling out of driveways and for people in cars who might be opening their doors in your path, aka "the door zone."
2. **Traffic signals** won't be changing. During green lights, drivers will be turning left into your path, so slow down through intersections and be wary: Drivers may not be used to looking for you, especially while this lane is new.
3. Need to make a right turn? Your best option will probably be to take it "Dutch" style, stopping at the intersection and walking your bike through the crosswalk, or to make a left turn and loop around into the lane that goes straight to your destination. **Always yield to pedestrians.**

responsible if they hit a cyclist.

6. Green paint at driveways and intersections signals potential conflict zones between drivers and cyclists. Be extra cautious when pulling through these zones, looking both ways, and stop before the green paint, in case a cyclist is riding by. You've been doing this for years for pedestrians, but, keep in mind, **cyclists travel much faster**, between 10 and 20 mph.

7. Lane markings help you see cyclists, and are positioned 12 feet ahead of you at left turns. However, when you've got a green light, you might miss a cyclist whizzing by. Always yield to cyclists going straight when making a left turn—think of it **as the pedestrian crossing that never ends**.

Pedestrians

8. It will be dangerous to walk or jog in the cycle track. In fact, the new cycle track will be labeled “**bicycles only**,” effectively prohibiting cars, pedestrians, skateboarders and moped riders from using it.

9. Be careful crossing the bike lane onto the sidewalk when you park next to it, and always **look both ways for cyclists**.

10. The new track will encourage cyclists to move off the sidewalk and onto the road. **Enjoy your bike-free sidewalk!**

Register for a free commuter class with the Hawai'i Bicycling League. When the bike lane opens, HBL will be teaching inexperienced cyclists how to use it. hbl.org. For more information about the King Street Cycle Track, visit honolulu.gov.

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