

CYCLING EMBASSY OF JAPAN

PRESENTS



2019

TOKYO CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AWARD

THE 2019 TOKYO CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AWARD

“ If you want to build a better city, you can start by building better bike lanes.

- Janette Sadik-Khan

In recent years in order to foster environmentally-friendly and healthy mobility, cities around the world have been taking measures to reverse the damage done, and mistakes made, during decades of car-focused city planning.

These days, the best urban planners and road engineers understand that city streets are not just for moving automobiles from point A to point B as quickly as possible. Instead, planners in 21st century cities are designing streets that prioritize the needs of people.

In the modern city private car use is discouraged in favor of public transportation and human-powered mobility. In many cities around the world, space on major roadways is being reclaimed and transformed into networks of connected and protected bicycle lanes - making all the areas of a city easier and safer to access by users of non-motorized transport.

Major cities such as New York, London and Paris, faced with rapidly rising populations, outdated infrastructure, and overly burdened transportation systems are now looking to cities like Copenhagen and Amsterdam, and their world renowned cycling infrastructure, for solutions.

Between 2007 and 2017, the City of New York has enjoyed a 134% increase in daily cycling. Its growing network of bicycle lanes, which now extends for 2000 kms, boasts 580 kms of protected/segregated bikeways and 194 kms of protected on-street lanes.

Along NYC's very first parking protected bicycle lane on 9th Avenue, cycling volume rose by 65%, crashes decreased by 48%, and retail sales rose by 49% - a win-win for everyone, proving the paradigm shifting potential of bicycle lanes in the city.

London also is becoming a cycling city with its growing network of "cycle superhighways", "quiet ways", and "mini-Hollands". As a result of this, London has seen a 130% increase in daily cycling since 2000.

The city of Paris now has 700 kms of cycling track. And under the leadership of Mayor Anne Hidalgo, it has ambitious plans to make trips by bicycle more numerous than car trips by doubling its bike path network and by closing sections of the city to motor vehicle traffic.

Recently, a lane was audaciously removed along a major motorway along the Seine River and converted to a two way bike path - Paris' first protected express route into the city for people on bicycles.



SO, WHAT'S GOING ON IN TOKYO?

Well...not so much.

Mainly due to a perceived lack of space, little coordination between municipalities, and a general unwillingness to change what seems to work well enough (14% of trips taken in Tokyo are by bicycle), within Tokyo today there are just 40 kilometers of dedicated bicycle lanes.

The good news is, despite being few and (very) far between, some of these bicycle lanes serve their neighborhoods quite well. Bicycles in Japan have long been recognized as ideal utility vehicles, used for short trips like running errands and making trips to the market, etc. The best bicycle lanes in Tokyo allow residents to do this more safely.

Unfortunately, almost all of the best lanes in Tokyo are quite short and have a tendency to end abruptly. Only one of the five which we have recognized as the city's very best utilizes road/motor vehicle space as opposed to sidewalk/pedestrian space. This unwillingness to encroach on motor vehicle space is problematic - segments of sidewalk bike lanes might work well on a particular street in a local neighborhood, but if these segments don't eventually evolve into a network of lanes connecting all of the city, bicycling in Tokyo will never reach its full potential.

For lanes to be effective and efficient they need to be connected, continuous and cohesive. In other words, it is essential for lanes to be part of a user-friendly, safe, uniform network that allows all users - especially women, children, and the elderly to get to wherever they want to go without fear of suddenly being forced back into pedestrian space or, worse, into the roadway with moving traffic.

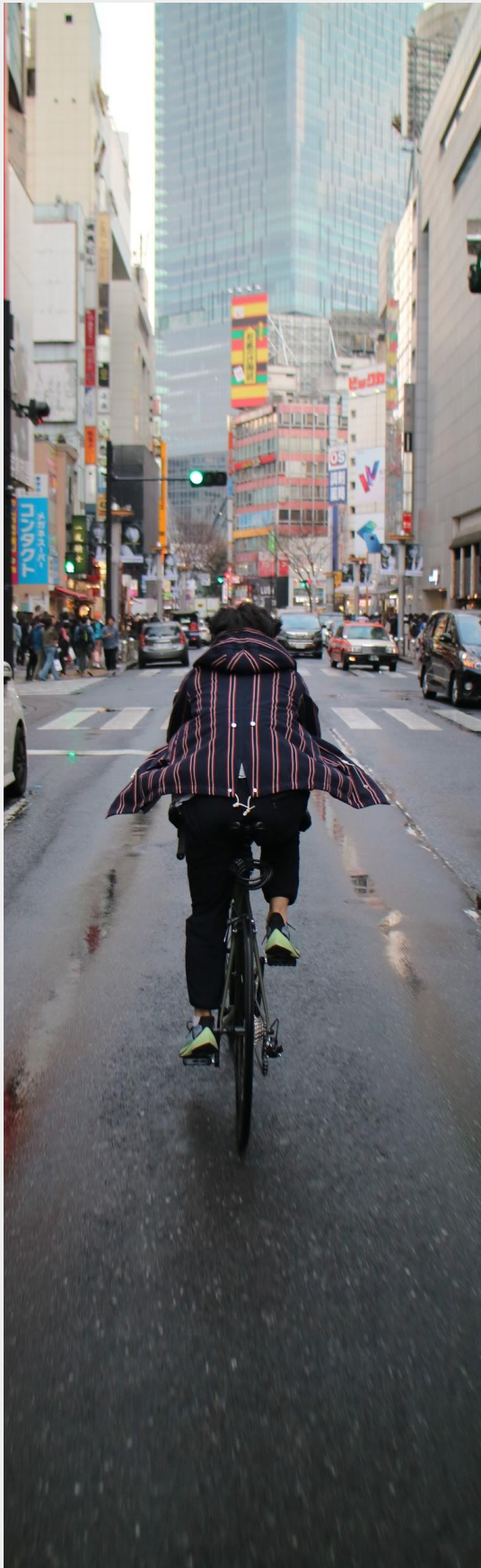
One valid reason for continuing with the present mishmash system of lane design is that a more uniform network of lanes could possibly take away from the character of individual neighborhoods. A system of identical looking lanes running on sidewalks adds to safety and convenience but could indeed diminish the uniqueness and charm of local neighborhoods. As the late great urbanist Jane Jacobs said - "The ballet of the good city sidewalk never repeats itself from place to place."

However, as mentioned, uniformity and standardization is necessary to create a cohesive and continuous network - so, given both of these perspectives, what should be done?

If a coherent and uniform network is to ever develop, road space, where coherence and uniformity is a design requirement, must be utilized. Converting car lanes on wider roadways into protected cycle tracks, will not only add charm and character to roads presently devoid of both, but, most importantly, they will serve as the major arteries from which a cohesive network of bike lanes can grow.

In Tokyo, 84% of trips taken are by people walking, biking or using public transportation, yet the majority of road space is allocated to motor vehicle traffic. In other words, there is plenty of room for high-quality bicycle infrastructure - it's just being occupied by cars right now. Let's share the road!

Despite the need for a fairer allocation of road space. for most Tokyo bike riders familiar with their city, things work pretty well as they presently are. The most dangerous streets can often be avoided by taking shortcuts along low-traffic, parallel streets and narrow alleyways. Seniors, mothers, and children on bikes use the sidewalks.



Tokyo, because of its compact, human-scale neighborhoods and the pragmatism and resourcefulness of its residents (the “gaman spirit”) is a city where cycling makes sense and is already very popular. So why mess with a good thing? What can bike lanes do for Tokyo? Are there issues that they could resolve? Let’s see.

Tokyo has a high bicycle usage rate (great!) but this combination of many people on bikes sharing limited sidewalk space with pedestrians (for lack of better infrastructure), inevitably leads to conflict and accidents - and indeed there was a 30% rise in accidents between pedestrians and cyclists from 2007 to 2012 according to National Police Agency statistics.

Tokyo (and Japan as a whole) has a very high pedestrian and cyclist traffic fatality rate compared to other countries at over 50%. In Japan, the victim in a fatal motor vehicle crash is most likely someone not in a car. Better cycling and pedestrian infrastructure that protects and separates all road users is sorely needed on all high-traffic/high-speed roads.

The Tokyo train system is chronically overcrowded with lines running at up to 199% capacity. This “train commuter hell” now costs the nation an estimated 142.4 billion yen per day due to lowered productivity. A network of protected bicycle lanes would help to alleviate the strain on the system and to provide workers living and working in Tokyo with a healthy and stress free way to escape the madness.

The opportunity cost of incomplete roadways is substantial. A network of protected bicycle lanes will create new opportunities for neighborhood businesses and, in conjunction with an expanded bicycle share system, can enhance tourist experiences by allowing visitors to make the most of their time and to more actively experience different areas of the city. Bike riding Tokyoites may know how to bypass the dangerous 246 or the traffic on route 1 but visitors definitely don’t. If you are seeing Tokyo only by subway, taxi or tour bus you are missing out on so much.

The fastest and best way to decrease carbon emissions is to start designing streets to actively encourage people to leave their cars. Bicycles, of course, are the best zero emission vehicles. If we are to act on the climate change crisis now facing us scientists say we only have 12 more years to make a difference.

THE 2019 TOKYO CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AWARD TOP RANKING

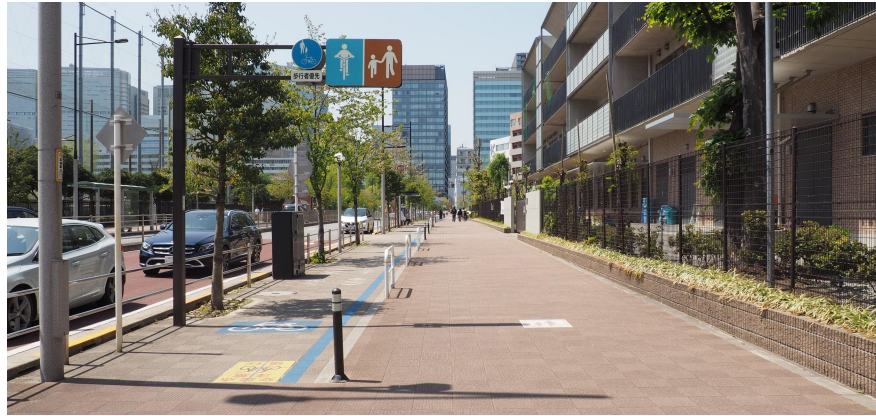
Over the past few weeks, members of the Cycling Embassy of Japan, have been getting on our bikes and going out to see the latest in what Tokyo has to offer in terms of cycling infrastructure. And, in the hope of generating some interest - and perhaps even a bit of healthy competition between Tokyo municipalities, agencies and planners, we thought we would rank and award the best of what we found.

In order to rank the lanes, we first narrowed down a long list of Tokyo streets with any sort of cycling infrastructure (most common are narrow, unprotected sharrows with pictographs) down to about 20 of the best. We then gave these bike lanes a score in the categories of design, safety, and usage from 1-10 (10 being the best). Scores were then compiled and averaged. Here are the results.

5

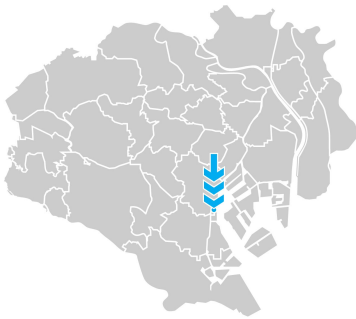
RANKED

5



KŌNAN BIKE PATH

MINATO-KU



[HTTPS://GOO.GL/MAPS/LZJBU7YPZZUUVRF8](https://goo.gl/maps/LZJBU7YPZZUUVRF8)



The Konan sidewalk lanes are located approximately 600 meters east of Shinagawa Station and run on both sides of the road for about 180 meters between the Tokyo University School of Marine Science and Konan Elementary School.

These lanes are nicely set off from the pedestrian sidewalk to the left with blue and white lines and paving blocks of a lighter color, and take advantage of the very wide sidewalk space with large painted graphics on the lanes and on overhead signs.

The street is connected with another parallel street one block north that actually has parking protected bike lanes (which didn't make it into the top 5 due to the lane being in the door zone), by two other local streets with bike lanes and sharrows respectively, both of which are often blocked by parked cars.

Konan deserves credit for being willing to experiment with the ample space available in the area. Now they need to commit to a plan and put it all together into better bike lanes and a cohesive network.

RANKED

5

KŌNAN BIKE PATH

MINATO-KU

TOTAL SCORE: 22.5



SAFETY RATING (7.6)

Transition Points - Only attempt to prevent pedestrian collisions is a warning sign on the ground (these fade or get damaged over time).

Cohesion - Near its end on the east runs Kaigan Dori, a north-south artery with only a wide sidewalk on each side (the roadway is for motorized vehicles only), but near the other end on the west is another, narrower north-south street to <480> with on-street bike lanes, and between these is a bidirectional one-laner with blue chevrons (share-the-road arrows).

Obstacles - The path disappears at bus stops. Sign posts, utility poles and tree bases are at-grade and encroach on useable bike path space.

Traffic Separation - There are U-shaped bollards interspersed between the pedestrian and bicycle areas. This only partially prevents pedestrians from using the bicycle side of the path.

Lighting - Illumination is provided by both street lamps on the path side and additional lamp posts in-between. So good job on the lighting at least.



DESIGN RATING (7.5)

Communication - The path is clearly marked with both ground markings and overhead signs. This still doesn't seem to help keep the pedestrians off the marked area.

Understandable - The signs use mainly standard pictograms (pogostick and riderless bicycle) but ground warning signs at the exit alert of pedestrian collisions using both pictograms and Kanji text, making it hard to understand the message from the pictograms alone.

Promotes Safety - The design does not completely separate the pedestrian zone and it looks like absolutely no thought was put into intersections and bus stops.

Transition Instructions - There are indications where the lane starts and it is clear when it ends but no other information about where a cyclist should go (on the street, remain on the sidewalk, other).



USAGE RATING (7.5)

Popularity - There are many large residential buildings in this area, a daycare, and office space, which would indicate a high usage. However, at a cursory glance there appeared to only be a marginal amount of cyclists in proportion to the number of residents in the area.

Broad Spectrum - Users were older and some mothers with electric assist bicycles used the path.

Scalable - It seems the lanes are serving cyclists pretty well, but for them to be a safe and comfortable space for a larger number of people on various kinds of bikes, they would have to be expanded from their current width, preferably taking away vehicular space although it's often politically challenging.

Majority Preference - Seniors and parents tended to use the bike path but delivery and recreational bicyclists used the road.



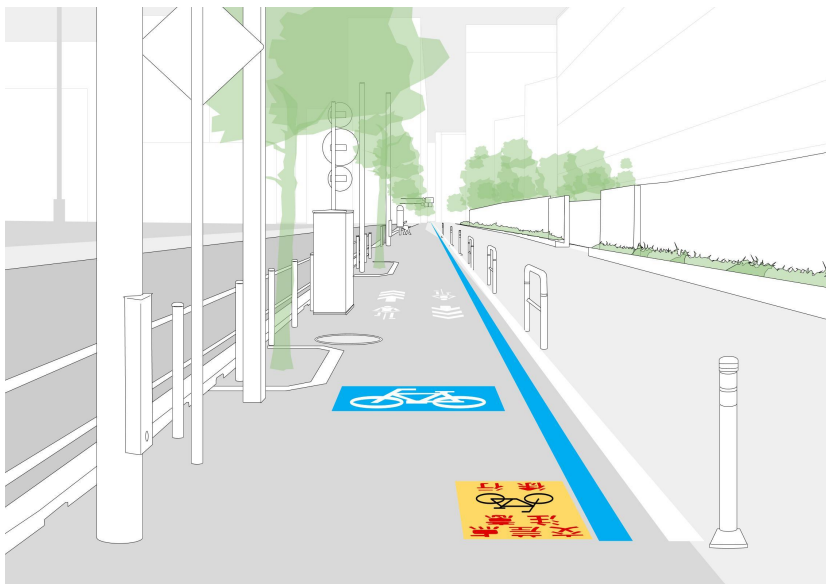
RANKED

5

KŌNAN BIKE PATH

MINATO-KU

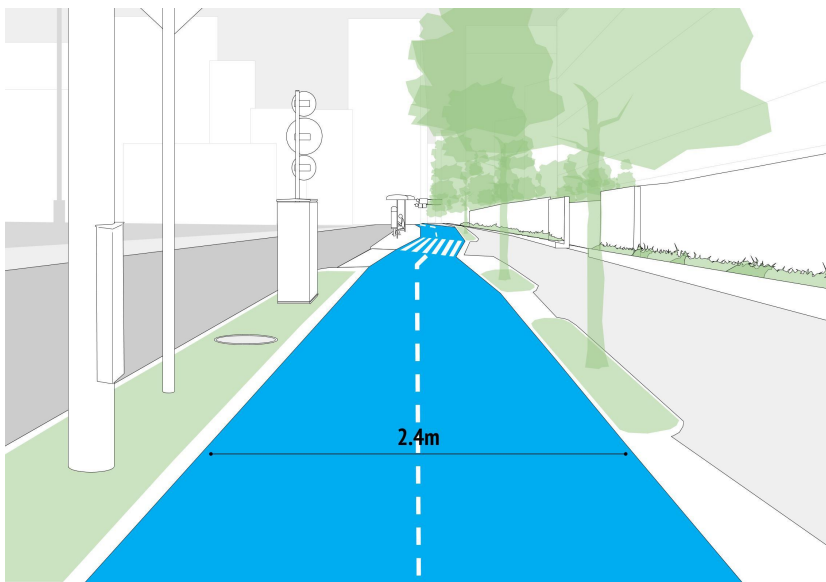
IMPROVEMENTS



CURRENTLY

We understand budget limitations and this is probably the best that could be built within the budget.

However, it may be better to make a proper investment when it comes to making a city look good, feel safe, and work well for all users.



TIPS

The trees are moved to a center location to provide shade for the road users who need to be cooled and have some sun protection (people in cars are already out of the sun). Trees should also not block the road signs (safety).

Road drainage and sidewalk / bike lane drainage are separated.

A utility island protects from the street traffic and bus stop island provides a safe place for bus passengers to wait for the bus.

A minimum of 2.4m wide bi-directional path takes some space away from the vehicle area and pedestrian area.

The tree barrier is permeable allowing for cyclists from businesses and schools to enter and exit the bike lane freely.

The lane will connect so there is no need for the abrupt warning signs.

Illustration purposes only. Feasibility studies would need to be conducted for viability for cost, local ordinances, and other unknown specification.

4

RANKED

4



YAMATE-DORI

SHINJUKU-KU



[HTTPS://GOO.GL/MAPS/WT53AGI23HWCiKHP7](https://goo.gl/maps/WT53AGI23HWCiKHP7)



Yamate-dori is a major, heavily trafficked, road that runs all the way from Itabashi to Shinagawa. There are various somewhat similar looking segments of lanes on the sidewalk all along the route, but the section running north and south near Higashi-Nakano stands out from the rest with its length and width, clear signage, and the lovely planters separating cyclists from both cars and pedestrians. In other areas of Yamate-dori where the sidewalk is narrower, pedestrians and cyclists are separated simply with a white line and different shades and patterns of tile – which mostly fails to keep pedestrians and cyclists apart. The Yamate-dori sidewalk and lanes are very well-lit at night.

Yamate-dori has many sections of sidewalk bike paths and we evaluated it as a whole. We think it would be best if it was a consistent protected bike lane that runs along the road and connects to a larger network of protected bike lanes.

RANKED

4

YAMATE-DORI

SHINJUKU-KU

TOTAL SCORE: 23.2



SAFETY RATING (8.5)

Transition Points - Yamate Dori is a long road so the bike path will vanish in some points and pick up again later. Overall it's poorly designed and it does not indicate what to do at these transition points.

Cohesion - The Yamate Dori bike path is connected to other bicycle lanes in multiple areas. This is a rare thing to find in Tokyo. We wouldn't go as far as calling it a cohesive network but it has places where it connects to blue paint.

Obstacles - On the Yamate-Dori bike path, one has to ride over countless curbs as they cross other streets. The path has maintenance doors on the ground only along the bike area. The lane contains utility poles at some locations, bulky plants tend to diminish the space people can feel comfortable riding in, and sometimes parked bicycles also make the space even narrower in front of businesses as there is no on-street bike parking.

Traffic Separation - As a sidewalk path it separates the vehicular road traffic from the bicycle area but there is little done to separate pedestrian traffic from entering the cycling area and vice-versa. As the bike path is not wide enough for two cyclists to pass each other or for a cyclist to overtake another comfortably, one of them tend to enter the pedestrian area in either situation.

Lighting - The path is well lit by street lamps but there are places with no/little shade, where trees are not even planted for future growth and shade. Just exposure to the sun and glare off cars and buildings.



DESIGN RATING (6.5)

Communication - The bike path typically has overhead signs (pogostick), a light-gray surface color that makes it distinguishable from the pedestrian area, and ground markings. This light gray surface makes the markings hard to notice, which might be one of the reasons why pedestrians often walk along the road side in the bicycle path.

Understandable - The distinction between the pedestrian and cyclist areas is indicated mostly by pictograms and can be understood by anyone, but some warnings such as "Yield to pedestrians" (歩行者優先) and "Slow down!" (スピード落とせ!) are shown only in Japanese text.

Promotes Safety - The design separates the heavy traffic on the street with the bicycle infrastructure, and where the Metropolitan Expressway appears overground, it's covered by noise-reducing walls.

Transition Instructions - There are no clear directions about what users should do at the end of the bike lanes. When one reaches an intersection there usually is a bike crossing with some ground marking (riderless bicycle) and hiragana (じてんしゃ) but there should be clearer and more continuous directions spanning the transition points.



USAGE RATING (7.5)

Popularity - It can be very busy at times. The total length of this bike path means it will be busier in some stretches and empty in others. As a whole, the percentage is roughly the same or a little bit less than the other sidewalk paths we've explored.

Broad Spectrum - As a long and relatively safe backbone of a network, this pair of paths support a wide range of users including elderly, parents with their kids on the child seats, morning commuters and delivery cyclists, but during our observation we saw few kids riding along this road.

Scalable - Sidewalk lanes can cut into the pedestrian zone but as mentioned earlier this is not the area that needs to be converted. If traffic on the bike path becomes too much to handle they should basically take space away from the roads.

Majority Preference - Yes. The width is attractive to many users and the heavy traffic on the road compels users to use the side path.



RANKED

4

YAMATE-DORI

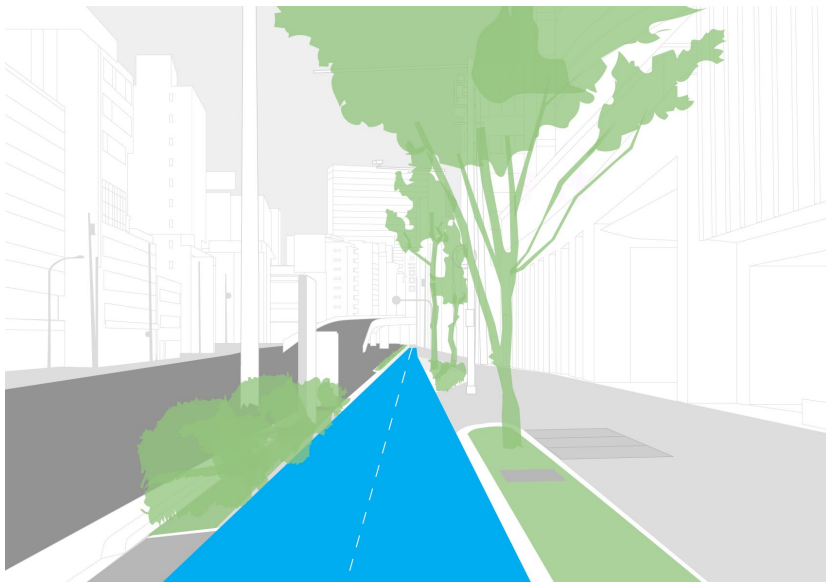
SHINJUKU-KU

IMPROVEMENTS



CURRENTLY

The bike path is sporadic on this road. It comes and goes and disappears when you need it most.



TIPS

Trees should go on the divider between the pedestrian and cycling areas.

Signage and utilities should also be located on the greenery.

Use of blue paint will help alert users to the bike lane.

A wide lane will accommodate many users. This may require taking away space from vehicles.

Illustration purposes only. Feasibility studies would need to be conducted for viability for cost, local ordinances, and other unknown specification.

3

RANKED

3



SHINAGAWA-DORI

CHŌFU-SHI



[HTTPS://GOO.GL/MAPS/P4W7NYIPLAPTSYN8](https://goo.gl/maps/P4W7NYIPLAPTSYN8)



The bike lanes on both the north and south side of Shinagawa-Dori in the Chōfu neighborhood of Tokyo run for approximately 500 meters. This is a sidewalk lane where approximately half the sidewalk was divided to create separate space for pedestrians and people on bikes. The lane for riders is clearly delineated from pedestrians with bright blue paint and bike markings. It is also (somewhat) separated from pedestrian space with white posts every 20 meters or so. As with nearly all lanes built on sidewalks, riders are separated from motor vehicle traffic by raised curbs. Here planters full of flowers have also been added. The lane ends abruptly at both ends where the sidewalk starts to narrow. Because sidewalk space is utilized instead of road space there is no motor vehicle traffic/speed calming effect from this design - which creates potential for collisions at corners along the route.

RANKED

3

SHINAGAWA-DORI

CHŌFU-SHI

TOTAL SCORE: 23.3



SAFETY RATING (6.8)

Transition Points - This is a sidewalk bike lane and most users entering this space prefer to approach it on the foot path rather than risk the road. The start and end are well signed and have a slight bump on the curb.

Cohesion - Unfortunately it does not connect to any other official bicycle infrastructure. But it is very close to it. We don't understand why they couldn't just put in a little extra effort to get these to connect. Tsurakawa-kaido has a bike lane that almost meets Shinagawa-Dori where this bike path is. They just don't meet up. The route to the station and the newest bike path near the station is not officially connected but users just ride on the sidewalk until they get there.

Obstacles - Road edges have a bump so every engagement with a cross road means the users have to experience a tiny kick in the ass. Also, manhole covers litter the bike path and can get slippery when wet. Bollards are placed in ill-defined sections of the bike path where planners just gave up and failed to provide a bicycle traffic solution.



DESIGN RATING (8)

Communication - The blue paint of the bike lane is the most powerful indicator that this path is for bike use. There are faded stencil bicycle ground markings and two different bicycle signs (pogostick and bike-ped-share).

Understandable - For the most part all signage is pictographic outside of the "zebra share" crossing stencil with the standard hiragana (じてんしゃ).

Promotes Safety - All sidewalk-based bicycle paths are inherently dangerous because pedestrians are free to move in and out of the bike path. At each major intersection the bike path disappears and cyclists go in many directions without instruction on how to safely traverse the space. It is separated from road traffic and it is safer on the path than on the road.

Transition Instructions - None. This is a failure.



USAGE RATING (8.5)

Popularity - Surprisingly this short bike path is very popular. The farther we go out of the core of Tokyo the higher the percentage of people on bikes. The usage seems to be consistent throughout the day. I'm sure it would be even more popular if it was connected to Chofu Station.

Broad Spectrum - There are many types of bikes on this path including some adult tricycles. Children do use this with their parents and it is popular with the elderly.

Scalable - Sidewalk-based bike paths can be expanded but at the expense of pedestrian paths. The ideal situation would be for vehicular areas to be narrowed in favor of more space for cyclists. However, this meter wide path on both sides of the road seems to be sufficient for the needs of the current ridership.

Majority Preference - Even with the curb bumps and pedestrians in the bike path, most cyclists prefer to use the bike path rather than the road. This also says something about how unsafe people feel cycling in traffic.



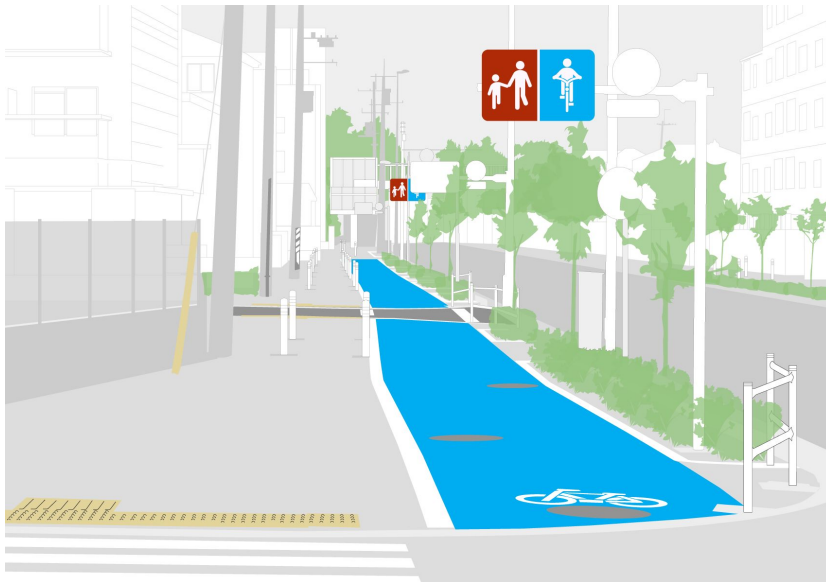
RANKED

3

SHINAGAWA-DORI

CHŌFU-SHI

IMPROVEMENTS

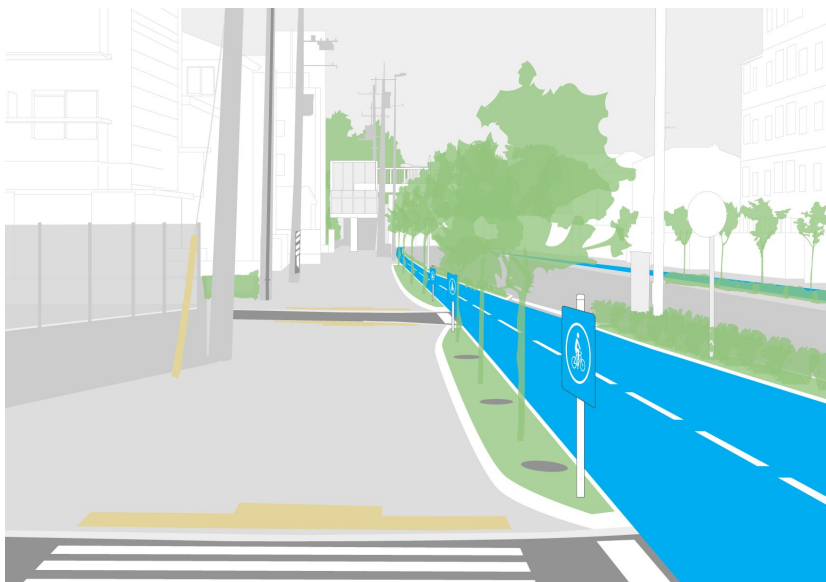


CURRENTLY

The bike path has many manhole covers and ends with an abrupt collision with a pedestrian walkway.

Poles try to create some safety but more than likely just get in the way.

Entire lane is painted but should be extended over the road to give cyclists priority at intersections.



TIPS

Move the trees and utility access (manholes) to a center divider to provide shade for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Signage should be a consistent color and at a height where people would look.

Path should not break but be a smooth consistent road surface.

Vehicle space should be used when path is interrupted by pedestrian bridges.

Illustration purposes only. Feasibility studies would need to be conducted for viability for cost, local ordinances, and other unknown specification.

2

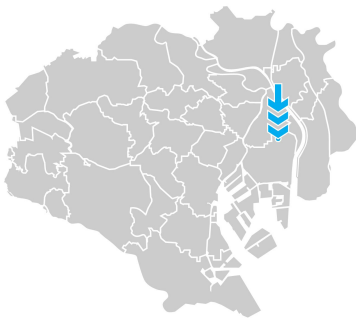
RANKED

2



KEIYO DORO

KŌTŌ-KU



[HTTPS://GOO.GL/MAPS/2HNKRY3WVYUYYY6Z8](https://goo.gl/maps/2HNKRY3WVYUYYY6Z8)



This is the only protected lane on our list that utilizes road space - so high marks were awarded for a design that doesn't take space away from pedestrians. It is quite lengthy and runs on both the north and south sides of the street. It is not especially nice to look at, and too narrow, but it is very functional and popular with a very high usage rate. Lots of kids and women can be seen using it - which doesn't happen very often on streets with this level of auto traffic volume. Here, there is clear separation of pedestrians, people on bikes, and motor vehicles. On this very busy, high-traffic street, they could have tried to divide up the sidewalk or simply added a blue strip of paint next to the curb but they instead boldly decided to take space away from cars thus prioritizing safety of peds and cyclists - and that is commendable. We wouldn't be surprised if it hasn't already averted accidents and injuries.

RANKED

2

KEIYO DORO

KŌTŌ-KU

TOTAL SCORE: 23.3



SAFETY RATING (8.3)

Transition points - The start of the bike lane is on the corner of a large intersection and is a common place for people to wait for a taxi. This could cause collision issues.

Cohesion - This bike path does not officially connect to other bicycle networks or bicycle-friendly paths.

Obstacles - Unlike other bike paths, they do a good job of keeping lamp posts in the berm between the pedestrian zone and the cyclist zone. However, they extended the tactile pavers (the yellow bumps for visually impaired people) into the cycle path.

Traffic Separation - Yes. This is why this bicycle path has such high marks. Vehicles, cyclists, pedestrians, and waiting bus passengers. Each have their own place.

Lighting - Lighting is from tall street lamps and is not specifically designed for the bike path or specifically located at intersections where there are dark corners.



DESIGN RATING (8)

Communication - Perhaps they did not have a very robust sign budget but there is very little being done to communicate that this bike lane is here and that it is tucked between the hedge and road. I have a feeling that some cyclists traveling along this road might not have even known the bike path was there.

Understandable - The "dismount" signs (歩道では、自転車を降りて歩きましょう) are everywhere. All the signs can be confusing but it is clear that the city thinks of cyclists as a nuisance and not an asset. The ground paint only has arrows and dashes. Arrows that indicate that this narrow 1m-wide path is bi-directional.

Promotes Safety - There is one random diamond painted on the ground of the bike path in front of Denny's. But there are no signs for vehicle drivers to be careful at intersections and look for cyclists. There are some warning signs to look for pedestrians but nothing warning drivers about the presence of cyclists.

Transition Instructions - Nope. No budget for helpful signs.



USAGE RATING (8.5)

Popularity - Amazingly people use the bike path. It is the best option along this part of the road.

Broad Spectrum - This older part of Tokyo is somewhat outside the city core, and the cyclists are a good mix of young adults, teens, the elderly and parents.

Scalable - A meter wide with a concrete berm on one side, and on the other, auto-centric city planners who would never give up vehicle space for cyclists. However, this design makes it easier to take away vehicle space if they needed to expand the bike lane and give each direction 1m-wide lanes.

Majority Preference - It seems that the majority of cyclists will use the lane instead of riding on the street. It is attractive enough for riders to move off the sidewalk and over into the bike path.



RANKED

2

KEIYO DORO

KŌTŌ-KU

IMPROVEMENTS

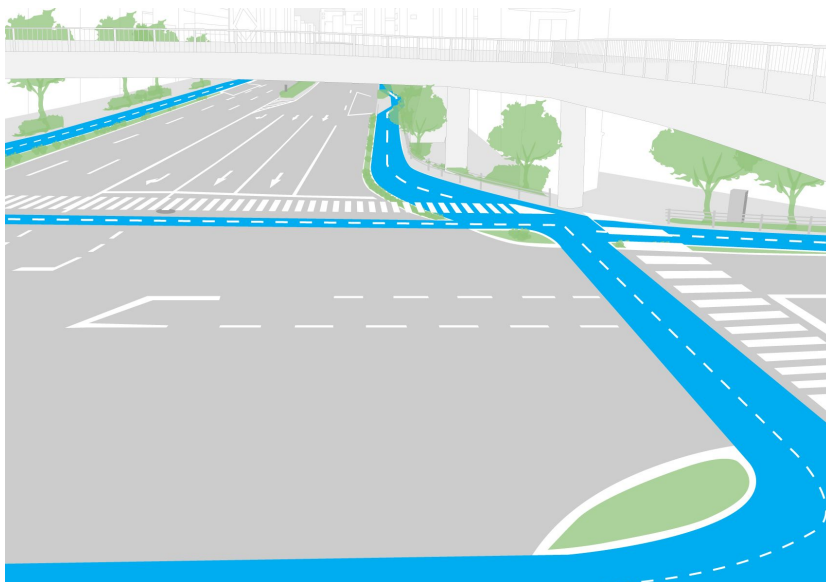


CURRENTLY

Separated crossings for pedestrians and cyclists and a bus stop island help to reduce dangerous encounters.

Fencing is used to separate cyclist and vehicle traffic.

Signage is inconsistent and lane markings come and go.



TIPS

Full blue lanes with lane markings.

Refuge islands at major intersections.

More greenery.

Illustration purposes only. Feasibility studies would need to be conducted for viability for cost, local ordinances, and other unknown specification.

1

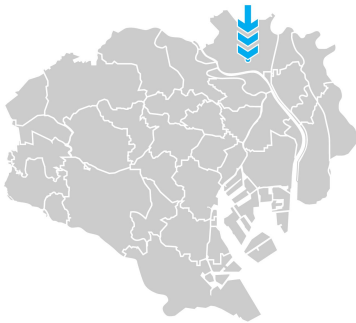
RANKED

1



SAKURA SANDO

ADACHI-KU



[HTTPS://GOO.GL/MAPS/9VHRJ7KV5KZCFUTM9](https://goo.gl/maps/9VHRJ7KV5KZCFUTM9)



Running on the sidewalk for about 300 meters on both sides of the street, the Nishiarai lanes nicely separate cyclists from pedestrians with many blue plastic posts placed fairly close together. Cherry trees along the road provide shade in summer and lovely hanami opportunities when the trees are blossoming. Plant boxes along the curb separate bike riders from car traffic.

There is plenty of easy to understand signage and lane markings. Located close to the train station in a residential area, these lanes had the highest usage score out of all the bicycle lanes we observed.

RANKED

1

SAKURA SANDO

ADACHI-KU

TOTAL SCORE: 25.9



SAFETY RATING (8.5)

Transition Points - Well marked with ground signs and overhead signs and enough space for cyclists and pedestrians to make their way to their side of the path.

Cohesion - Adachi-ku should try harder to build more space on other roads for cyclists because they have a lot of people on bicycles and they find their own paths along back streets and shopping roads.

Obstacles - The manhole covers are mainly in the middle of the path between the pedestrian area and the cycling area but there are a few in the bike path and the metal covers do get slippery when wet.

Traffic Separation - The one thing you notice immediately when you arrive at this section of bicycle infrastructure is the massive number of blue bollards that are between the pedestrian area and the cycling area.

Lighting - There are lamp posts just for the bike path. This is nice but there could be a few more of them. They do seem spaced a little bit too far apart. The signage could also be illuminated.



DESIGN RATING (8.5)

Communication - The entrance points are well labeled with two signs (pogostick) one with a brown background and one with a green background, both not the color of a standard bike path (usually blue). There is also a tiny bicycle symbol with a green background on the first blue bollard with arrows pointing to which side pedestrians and cyclists should use on the sidewalk.

Understandable - While most of the signage is clear and uses only pictograms there are issues with all the color mixing and some signs have Japanese without any furigana. Children use this space too, so it's not just a problem for people who don't know Japanese.

Promotes Safety - Arrow markings indicate which side of the bike path users should be on. An unfortunate thing is that the path disappears at parking-lot entrances and street crossings.

Transition Instructions - This is one of the few bike paths that had some signage about the transition between the bike path and road/sidewalk. It's not much more than a "careful" sign but it is better than nothing.



USAGE RATING (8.9)

Popularity - The high score for this short stretch of bike path comes from the fact that it is very popular. The attractions in this area contribute to its popularity, as do the bike parking areas at Nishiirai Station and the small unofficial bike path that runs on the south-west side of the Tobu Isesaki Line. Being located outside the city center, bicycle usage is higher and more prevalent.

Broad Spectrum - Every age and demographic range uses this bike path. In a short period you can see young kids riding with their parents and the elderly traversing the path with their tricycles. Youths tend to use the path in small packs making their way to the shopping mall (Ario Nishiirai).

Scalable - This is a standard (for Tokyo) bike path mixed with a pedestrian path separated only by lots and lots of blue flexible bollards. This means that to increase the space for cyclists it will be at the expense of the pedestrians and not the vehicle space.

Majority Preference - Yes. As it happens to be a well labeled and somewhat protected (but easily escapable) bike path, cyclists really like to use it. They make their way over to the path and will dodge between the blue bollards to get into the bike path and avoid the pedestrian areas.



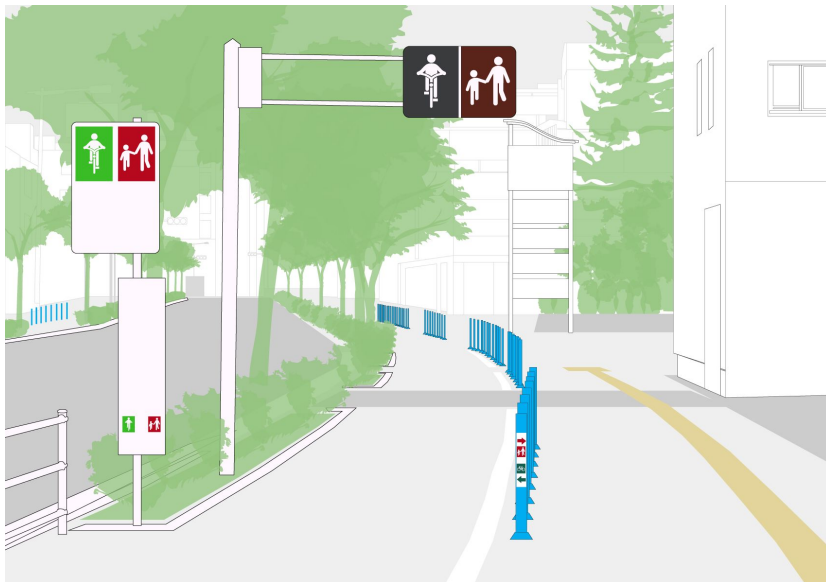
RANKED

1

SAKURA SANDO

ADACHI-KU

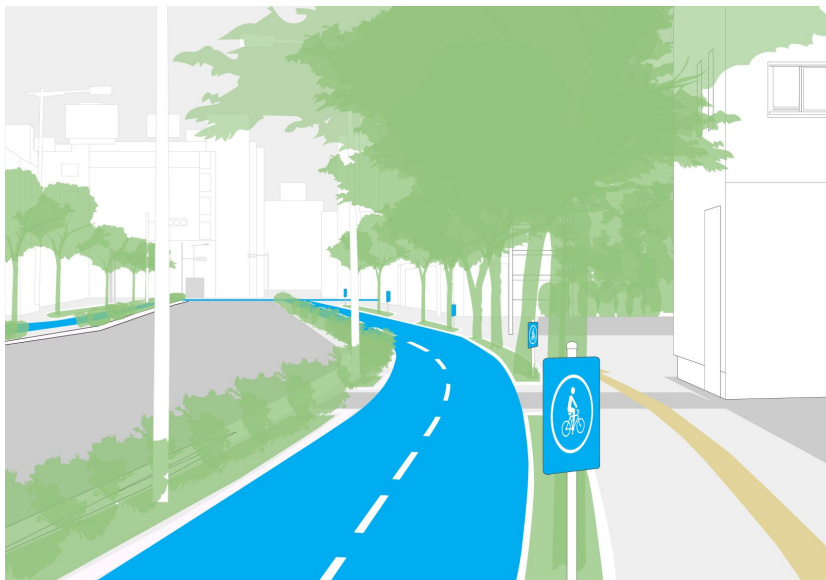
IMPROVEMENTS



CURRENTLY

The blue posts currently dominating this area create the ability for cyclists to easily enter and exit the bike area but also require a lot of explaining to keep pedestrians off of the bike path.

The current signage unfortunately uses multiple symbols and colors and there are too many signs to clarify the cycling area. Other visuals could help explain that this area is for cycling only.



TIPS

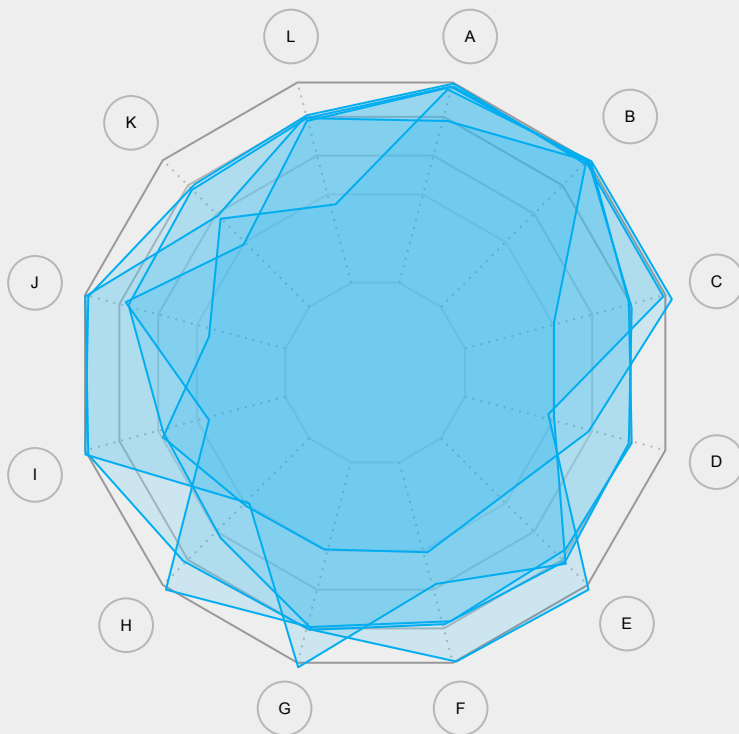
Move the trees to a center divider so they can provide shade for both pedestrians and cyclists.

Paint the entire path blue to make it visually clear that this is a bike path. Signage can be added at entry points using the same colors as the bike lane to make it clear and consistent.

Add a continuous network of bike paths at every intersections.

Illustration purposes only. Feasibility studies would need to be conducted for viability for cost, local ordinances, and other unknown specification.

THE 2019 TOKYO CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE AWARD CONCLUSION



DESIGN

- A) Communicates it is for cyclists
- B) Understood by non-readers
- C) Clear how to use safely
- D) Clear indications at start and end

SAFETY

- E) Feels safe (especially at transition points)
- F) Free from obstacles
- G) Traffic separation
- H) Shaded and well lit

USAGE

- I) Well used
- J) Used by different bicycle types
- K) Able to handle many cyclists
- L) Users prefer to use it

Tokyo's bike paths are usually on the sidewalk with pedestrians so it's not a prime example of good separated bike infrastructure and there is a serious lack of the blue road paint that Tokyo is so fond of using on some bike lanes. Many do not connect with other cycling networks and it even has gaps where planners seem to have just given up.

So why rank something that does not measure up to international standards? In our opinion the question needs to be more about if the cycling infrastructure works for an area or not. Yes, there are standards for building the best cycling infrastructure and there are some places in the world that have implemented those ideals. They have strong ridership because those cities invested in building a safe, well designed, and delightful cycling heaven. Tokyo is not one of those places yet. Many people from previous generations still think the car is king and have a hard time relinquishing the idea that you don't need one to have a quality life. In fact you have a quality life if you feel you have autonomy and the ability to get anywhere on your own.

Somehow the streets in Tokyo are flooded with all types of cyclists. This includes parents, kids, the elderly, teens and even some recreational cyclists passing through. It is built for the way cyclists have been cycling in the city for decades, among and alongside of pedestrians.

It may seem ridiculous to award the less-than-ideal, but it would be similarly ridiculous to award a perfect section of an empty bike lane. The Cycling Embassy of Japan supports cyclists. Not concrete or blue paint or even bicycles. Those are things that cyclists use and are necessary but they are not our main focus. The best infrastructure is one that cyclists have decided they feel is the best, and this criterion goes beyond whatever standards might be set in other countries.

We are already looking forward to evaluating Tokyo's cycling infrastructure next year. So good luck!

SPECIAL THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED
MAKE THIS REPORT POSSIBLE.



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