

# Seven Planning Sins of Edge Lane Roads

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## 1. Don't Let Perfect be the Enemy of Better

Some folks oppose ELRs because they aren't a protected facility. This is a red herring, especially for low volume roads that rarely receive funding for substantial improvements. The true question is whether one wants something better than a two-lane road configuration that forces vulnerable road users into the travel lanes.

## 2. Assuming Two Lane Roads are Better

ELRs are designed to support all road users. Many two lane roads, especially those with narrow shoulders, are designed only for motor vehicles and force vulnerable road users into the travel lanes. This requires 100% of drivers to identify and avoid vulnerable road users 100% of the time. The exclusive areas for motorists and vulnerable road users on an ELR reduces reliance on perfect drivers to avoid crashes. ELRs should be the default treatment for low volume roads.

## 3. Worrying About the Low Vision Population

An ELR does not support the low vision population as well as sidewalks do but it offers an improvement over two lane roads without sidewalks, especially when the road has little in the way of shoulders. Accessible Design for the Blind's position paper stating this can be found at [https://www.advisorybikelanes.com/uploads/1/0/5/7/105743465/accessible\\_design\\_for\\_the\\_blind\\_letter\\_of\\_support\\_for\\_edge\\_lane\\_roads.pdf](https://www.advisorybikelanes.com/uploads/1/0/5/7/105743465/accessible_design_for_the_blind_letter_of_support_for_edge_lane_roads.pdf).

## 4. Worrying about Speed, not Volume

Volumes are the primary enemy of ELRs, not motor vehicle speed. For example, a Scottish ELR posted at 60 MPH with approximately 1,400 ADT and 100+ bikes per day has been successful since 2005. High motor vehicle volumes transform an ELR into a two lane road with vulnerable road users in the travel lanes and high vulnerable road user volumes leave no room in the edge lanes for motorists to temporarily occupy.

## 5. Avoiding ELRs on Hilly or Curvy Roads

Hills and curves do not preclude an ELR as some guidance claims. Sufficient sight distance is the needed characteristic. Further, insufficient sight distance does not preclude an ELR. Good strategies exist for dealing with insufficient sight distance.

## 6. Believing ELRs are only for Bicyclists

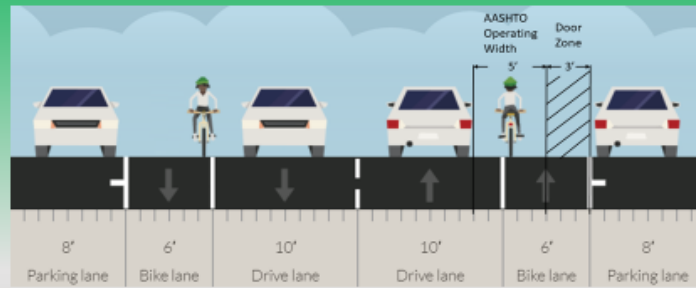
In addition to bicyclists, ELRs can be used to support pedestrians, equestrians, roller bladers, personal mobility devices, Amish horse-drawn wagons, etc.

## 7. ELRs are only for Narrow Roads

Planners often assume they should choose standard bike lanes over ELRs whenever sufficient width is available. Standard bike lanes are not always superior to ELRs. ELRs can provide much greater horizontal clearance between parked cars and moving cars than standard bike lanes can on many two lane roads (see illustration).

# BETTER THAN BIKE LANES

Door Zone Bike Lane



Edge Lane Road

