

Dear Road Wizard: I was confused by the Statesman article (12-22-02) on the situation at 9th and Front streets in Boise. Police will be monitoring wide right turns from southbound 9th to westbound Front. What exactly will the police be ticketing for? T.©

The right-turn arrangements here have evolved to become sane, humane, and practical. I am pleased to decode the situation. Simply put, we are being asked to stay on one side or the other of the SOLID WHITE LINE.

Please locate the SOLID WHITE LINE, which is extremely faded. (ACHD will repaint when dry weather allows.) It curves through the intersection from 9th Street onto Front.

People in the right-only lane used to think they had to swing wide in order to avoid getting stuck in the right-most lane on Front Street, which disappeared on them. Now the drivers in the right-only lane may choose to enter the right-most lane on Front OR the lane next to it. They no longer will be stuck in a lane taking them away from the Connector. They stay to the right of the SOLID WHITE LINE. If they swing any wider, police will ticket them.

Drivers turning from 9th Street's middle lane, which offers a choice to right turn or go straight, must not turn into either of the first two lanes to the right. They must stay left of the SOLID WHITE LINE. Then, and here comes the sane and humane part, they may enter ANY of the remaining lanes.

Let's say you are turning right from 9th's center lane and plan to turn left onto 11th Street. You may swing as wide as possible and enter the left-most lane, positioning yourself comfortably to make the turn. Or you can choose a Connector-bound lane. Just don't swing NARROW and occupy either of the two lanes reserved for the drivers born in 9th's right-only lane. Police will ticket if you do. This arrangement occurs at 6th Street and Front, also. At other intersections where two side-by-side lanes turn in the same direction, you may see a dashed line rather than a solid. These lines oblige you to stay in your own lane. They have the same meaning to police officers as this SOLID WHITE LINE at Front Street. Pick your lane and hold the curve! If you make a poor choice, don't fix it by swinging too wide or too narrow.

Dear Road Wizard: I've lived in cities with populations varying between 100,000 to three million. Boise's traffic lights are the most unsynchronized I've seen. Why can't lights be set so that one can "hit" them by traveling at or a little below the speed limits? E.H., Boise

Are you a contrarian, going east when the Main Commuter Herd is going west? Are you a night-shift worker, traveling after everyone else has gone beddy-bye? Are you indeed part of that Main Herd, a metal-shrouded Borg-like unit among thousands trying to evacuate along the same route at once? Accidents or peak hour overloads can defeat progression systems that would otherwise help you sail along "a little below the speed limit."

Boise does have synchronized progression, but not on all the streets where you might expect it. If your situation is one of the above, your route could resemble a street with no progression. Write again with details about your daily route -- where and when. At least I can tell you what to expect. Or not to expect. This offer good for anybody, not just E.H.