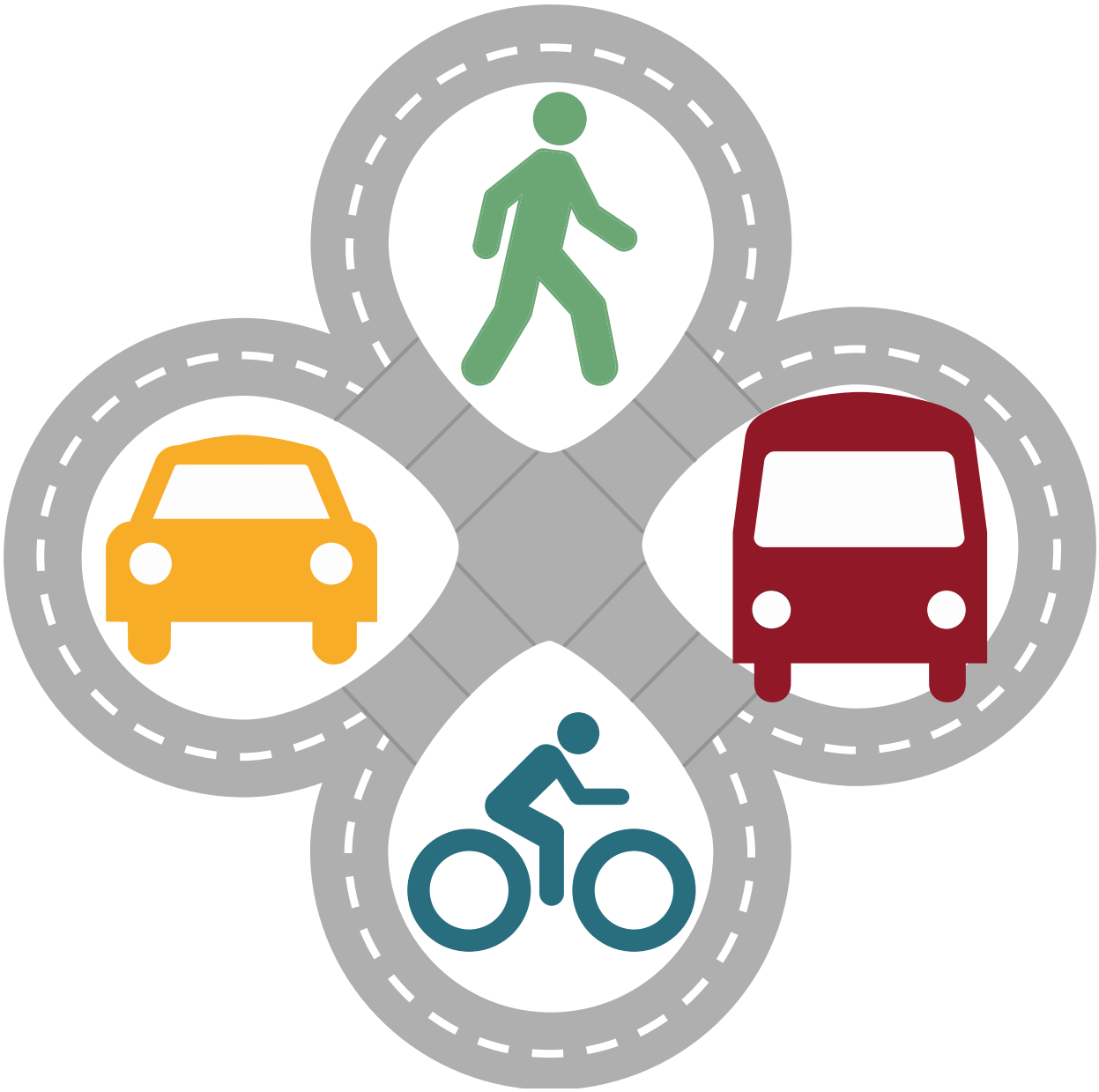
STREET CODE



Rules and Etiquette for Getting There Together

City of Cambridge, MA • 2016

Know the Code

The Street Code is a resource for everyone. Whether you walk, bike, drive, or use public transportation, you play an active role in the transportation system. In order for this system to function well, each person must **follow the rules**, **pay attention**, and **be patient** and **courteous**. Simple!

The Street Code is made up of five main sections, listed below. This document ends with a resource page containing relevant phone numbers and websites.

Rules of the Road	**4**
Reduce Risk: Be Alert	**8**
Reduce Risk: Be Predictable	**10**
Responsibility	**14**
Respect Others	**18**
Resources	**20**

Always yield to pedestrians.

Let's give each other a break, be a little more patient, and remember that we are all trying to get somewhere safely. With more people biking and walking and with a constant flow of new students, new drivers, and new cyclists, it's important to remember these **main themes** of the **Street Code**.

1. **Slow down.** The faster you travel, the higher the risk of crash and death. Is beating that yellow light really worth injuring someone, losing your job, or going to jail? Take a breath and slow down.

2. **Put yourself in someone else's shoes.** Imagine what it would feel like to be in their position. Don't assume the worst. Maybe they don't know the rules and norms of the road. Maybe they looked, but didn't see you. Be the person you want to see on the streets.

3. **It's not about you.** It's about all of us. We are all trying to safely get somewhere. Let's go out into the world trusting that we can come back alive and uninjured.

Rules of the Road

People Driving

- Must **stop** at red lights and stop signs.
- Must **yield** to people in crosswalks.
- Must **not travel**, **park**, or **stop** in a bike lane.
- Must stop behind the crosswalk and bike box **even if empty**.
- Must **yield** (when turning or parking) to people on bikes who are going straight.
- Must **never text and drive** — it's illegal and deadly!
- Must never pass another vehicle stopped at a crosswalk.
- Citywide speed limit is 25 mph unless otherwise marked.

People Biking

- Must **stop** at red lights and stop signs.
- Must **yield** to people in crosswalks.
- May use the **full lane** anywhere, any time, and on any street (except limited access highways) **even if there is a bike lane**.
- If 16 or younger, must **wear a helmet**.
- Must use **front lights** and **rear reflectors** between dusk and dawn.
- May **not** ride on the **sidewalk** in designated business districts.
- May pass vehicles on the right and move to the front of the intersection at stop lights, but should use caution.
- Must bike in the **same direction** as traffic unless otherwise marked or signed.
- May **not** wear headphones or earbuds in both ears while biking.
- Don't text and bike. Hands on your bike and eyes on the road.

People Walking

- Should be mindful of the flow of traffic and, where available, use the crosswalk and wait for the pedestrian signal.

People using Public transit

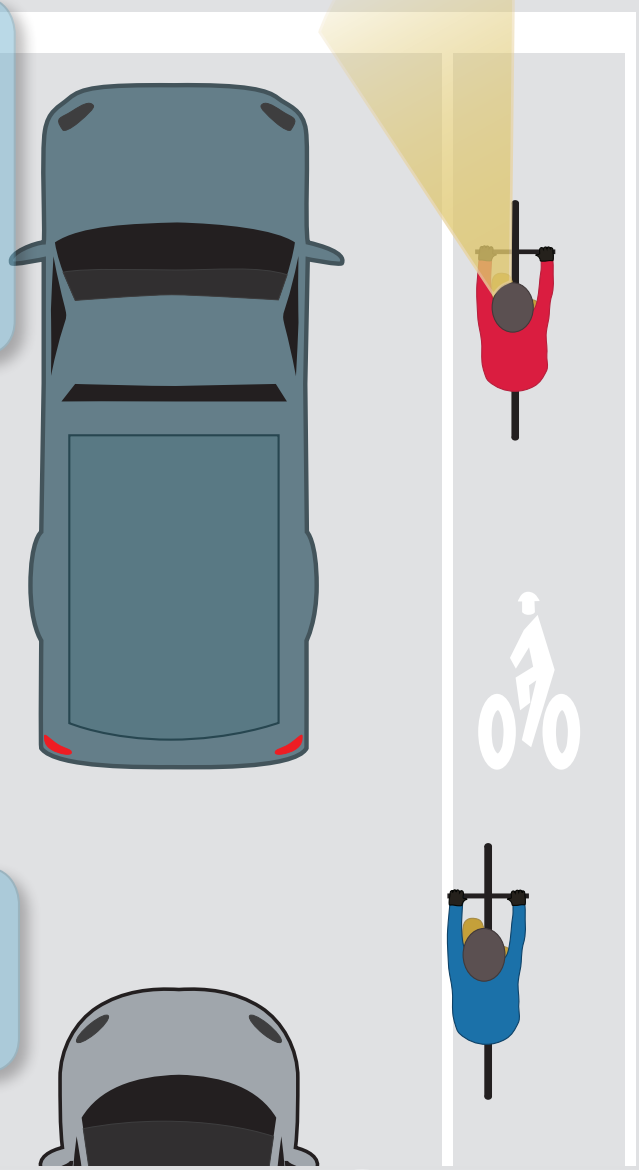
- Must give up seats labeled **Priority Seating**, as required by federal law, if someone who is pregnant, elderly, or disabled needs to sit down.
- Should exit through the **back** of the bus when possible.

Watch for People

Intersections and crosswalks are full of activity. Be alert when approaching an intersection or crosswalk and watch out for **people**!

People driving and **biking** must yield to **people walking** in crosswalks. Never pass a vehicle that is stopped at a crosswalk — it's dangerous and illegal.

People walking in the crosswalk should watch for **people biking** in the bike lane as they can move faster than vehicles in heavy traffic.



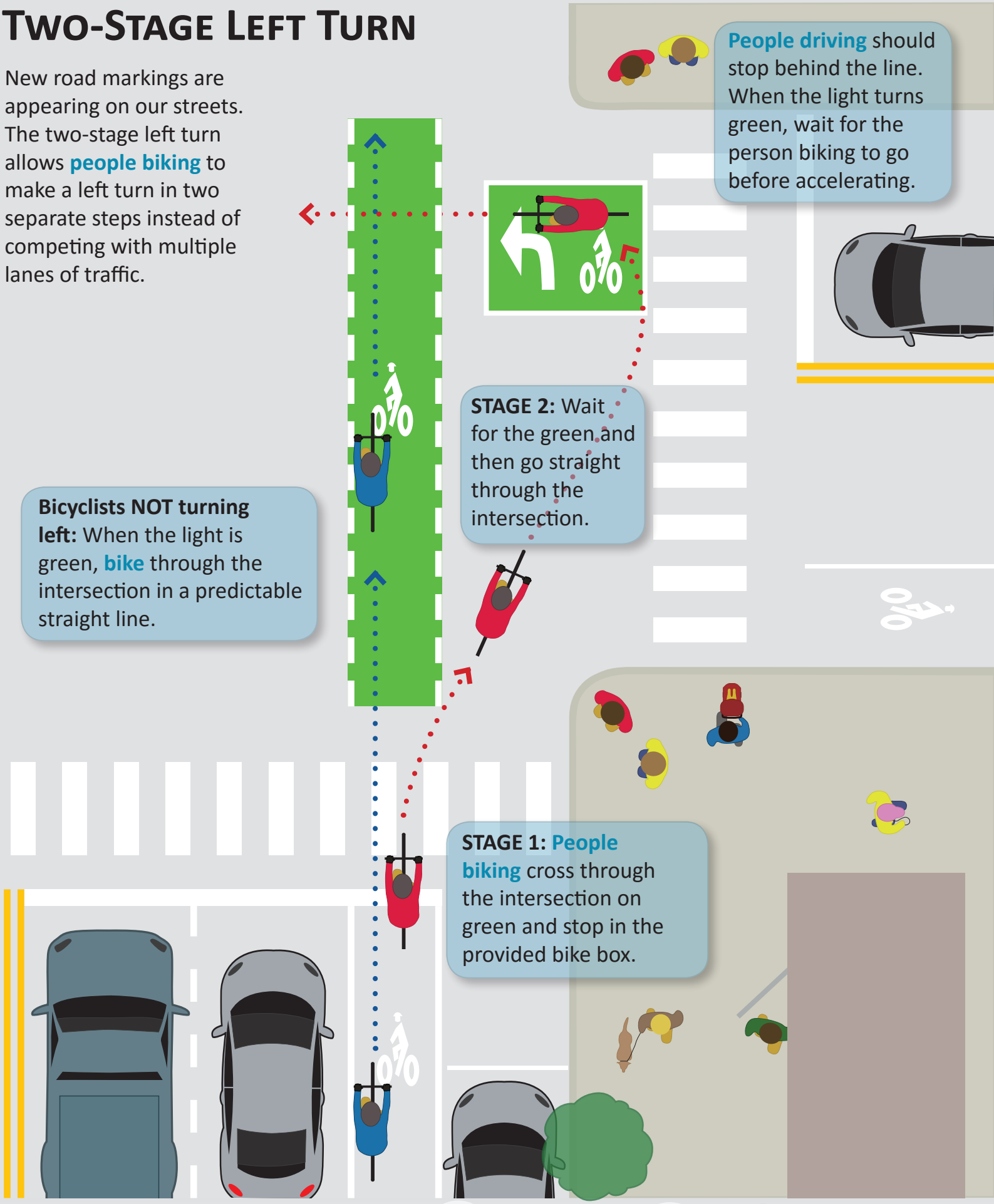
People biking should **slow down** when approaching crosswalks, especially during heavy traffic.

Be patient. We will all get to where we need to be. Let's get there alive and uninjured!

People biking should maintain a safe distance from other bicyclists, especially when approaching intersections.

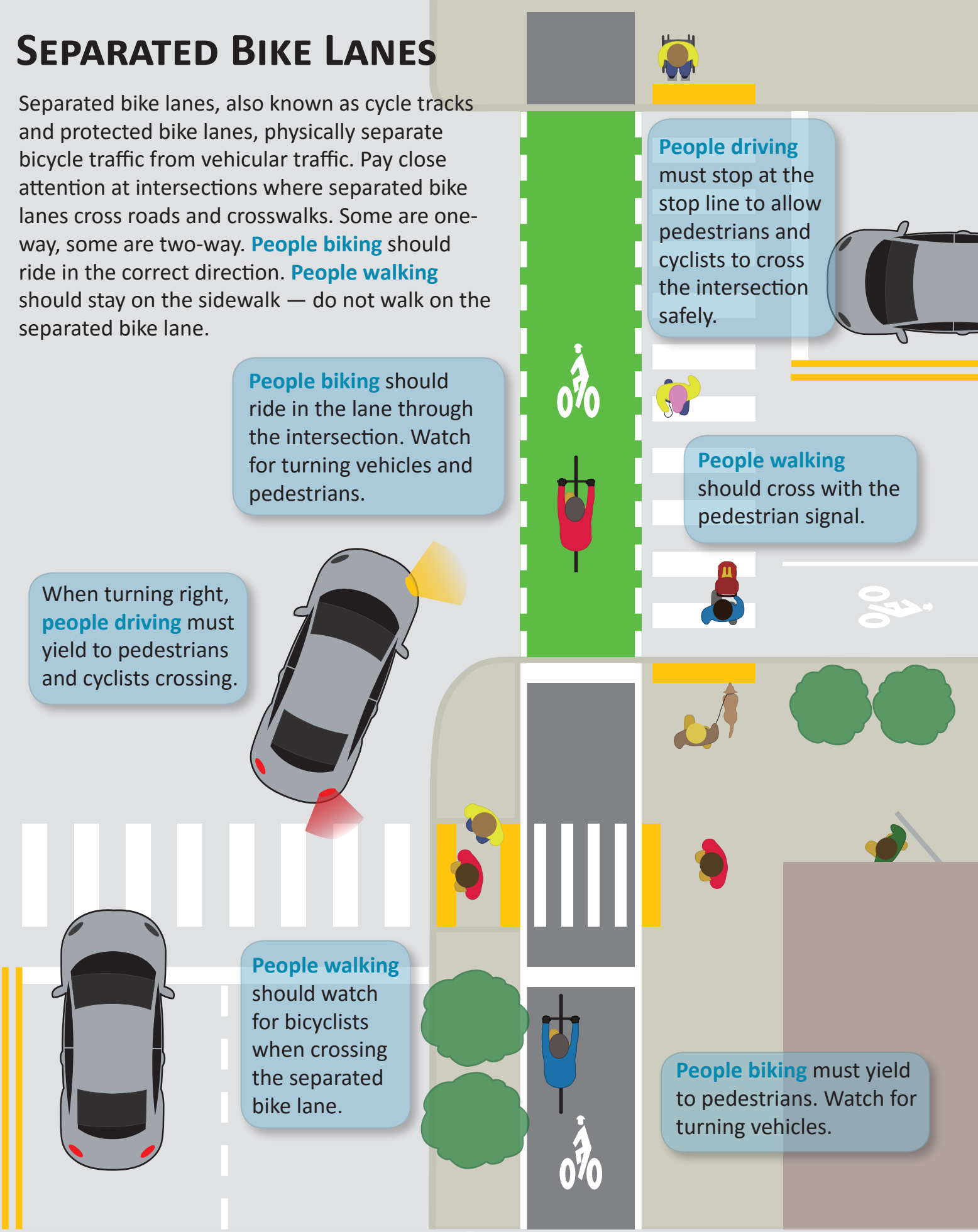
Two-Stage Left Turn

New road markings are appearing on our streets. The two-stage left turn allows **people biking** to make a left turn in two separate steps instead of competing with multiple lanes of traffic.



Separated Bike Lanes

Separated bike lanes, also known as cycle tracks and protected bike lanes, physically separate bicycle traffic from vehicular traffic. Pay close attention at intersections where separated bike lanes cross roads and crosswalks. Some are one-way, some are two-way. **People biking** should ride in the correct direction. **People walking** should stay on the sidewalk — do not walk on the separated bike lane.



Reduce Risk: Be Alert

People Driving

- Watch for bicyclists coming from behind, especially when turning.
- Before opening your car door or moving, **look in your mirror** and physically **turn your body** to make sure no bicyclists are coming.
- Pay attention to the **pedestrian signal** and give people walking the right-of-way.
- Allow room for bicyclists to pass on your right; **don't hug the curb**.

People Biking

- Understand that large vehicles make wide turns, take time to come to a full stop, and have large blind spots. **Give buses, trucks, and other large vehicles room and avoid passing them.**
- Put your phone away — your safety depends on all of your senses.
- Pedestrians are everywhere — be prepared to stop for them.
- Ride outside of the "door zone" (at least **3 feet** from parked cars) and watch for opening car doors.
- When passing vehicles on the right in heavy traffic, **slow down** as you approach a crosswalk. People may be crossing.
- Anticipate bus stops to avoid conflicts with a bus. Don't pass buses on the right — you might hit someone exiting the bus or you could get squeezed into the curb.

People Walking

- **Look up** from your phone when you cross the street.
- Look for bicyclists before stepping out into the crosswalk — they can travel **much faster** than vehicles in times of heavy traffic.
- Watch for turning vehicles before crossing.
- Be aware of your surroundings even if listening to music or talking on the phone.

People using Public transit

- Watch for vehicles and bicyclists when exiting the bus and crossing the street.

Doors Are Dangerous

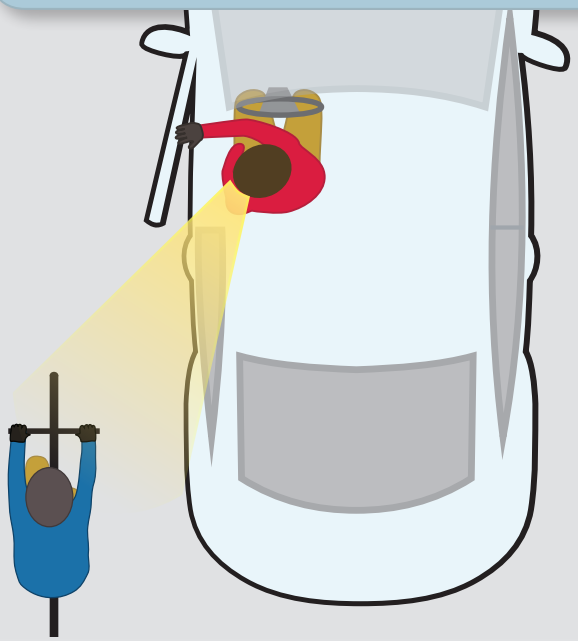
Vehicle doors pose a very serious threat to people biking.
Look before opening a car door — it could save someone's life.

People driving or **riding** in **cars**, **trucks**, **taxis**, or any other motor vehicle with a **door**:

1. Check your **rear-view mirror**.

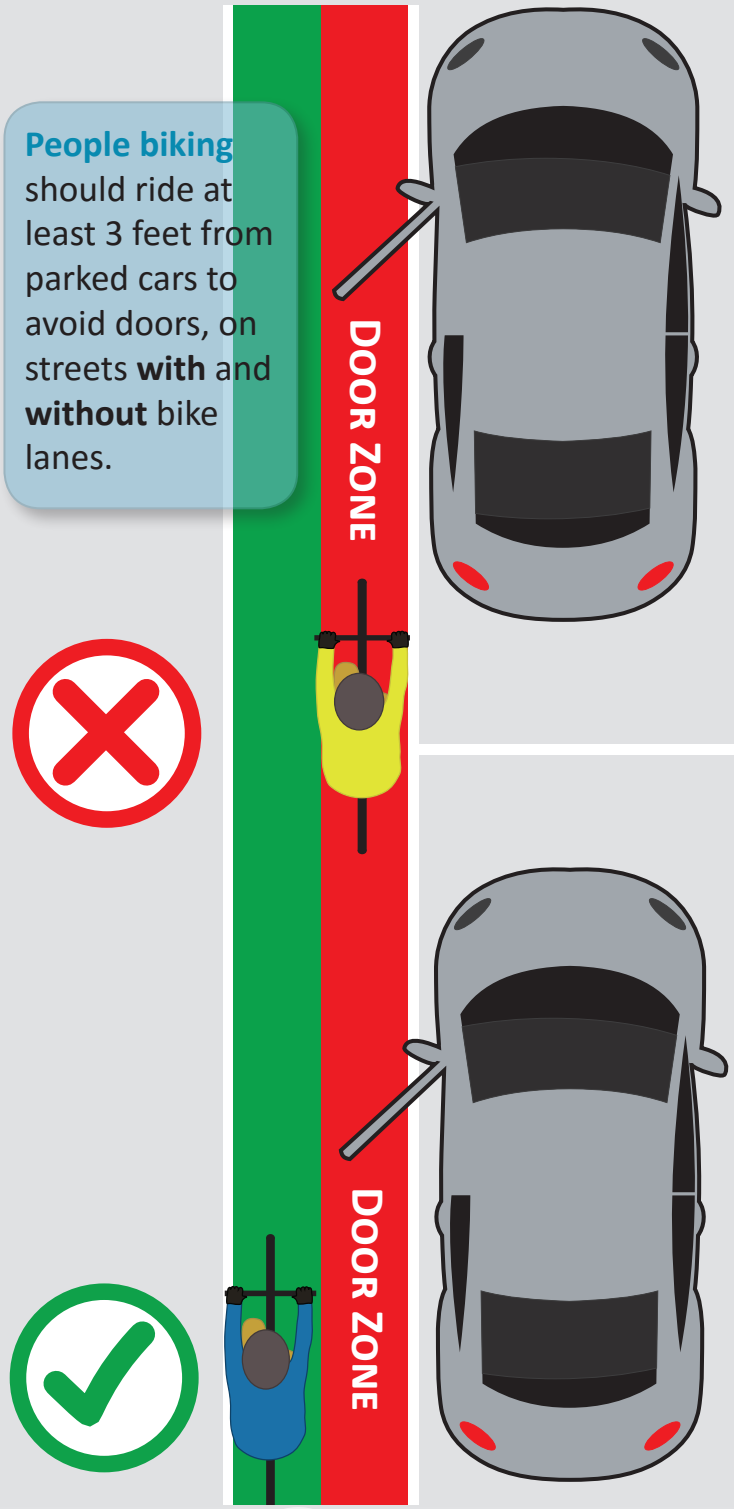
2. Check your **side-view mirror**.

3. Open the door with your **far hand.** The "Dutch Reach" forces your body to turn, making it a habit to look for bicyclists.



People biking should ride outside of the "door zone."

People biking should ride at least 3 feet from parked cars to avoid doors, on streets **with** and **without** bike lanes.



Reduce Risk: Be Predictable

Taking risks while driving a vehicle, riding a bike, or crossing the street impacts others around you. Act like your best friend lives here. Act like this is your neighborhood. Most importantly: **EVERYONE, SLOW DOWN**!

People Driving

- Communicate — **use your turn signal**!
- Give plenty of notice before turning or changing lanes — sudden movements can cause a crash.
- Stay at least **3 feet away** from bicyclists when passing.

People Biking

- Ride in a **straight line** so that people walking and driving know where to expect you.
- **Communicate** — use your arm, bell, or voice.
- Pass other people biking on the **LEFT**, not the RIGHT.

People Walking

- Make yourself visible — pause and **make eye contact** with people driving cars and riding bikes before crossing the street.
- Walk in a **predictable path** across the intersection.
- Stay to the **right** on shared paths.

People using Public transit

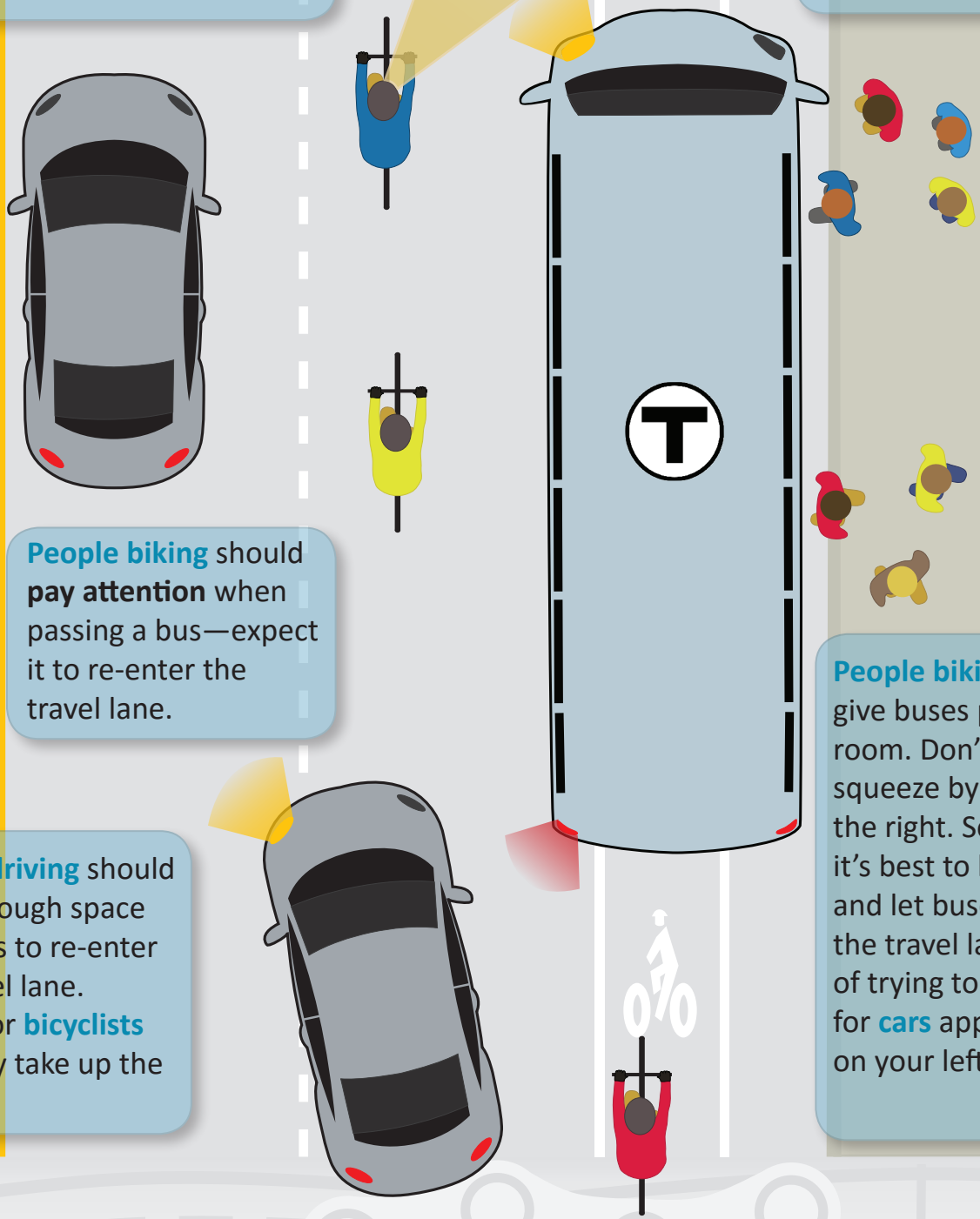
- Should cross at the nearest crosswalk.
- Never cross in front of the bus — wait for the bus to pass.
- Running to catch the bus puts everyone in danger. If your attention is focused solely on catching that bus, you may run out in front of a bike or car, or into a person. Just wait, you can catch the next one.

Be Careful Around Buses

Everyone should be careful around buses. Expect buses to stop frequently and know they require great care to be operated safely. Be courteous, give buses enough space to maneuver, and watch for **people**!

People biking who choose to pass a bus should take the lane and pass on the left. Watch for people who may be entering the crosswalk.

People walking should wait for the pedestrian signal or wait for the bus to go past the crosswalk before crossing.



People biking should **pay attention** when passing a bus—expect it to re-enter the travel lane.

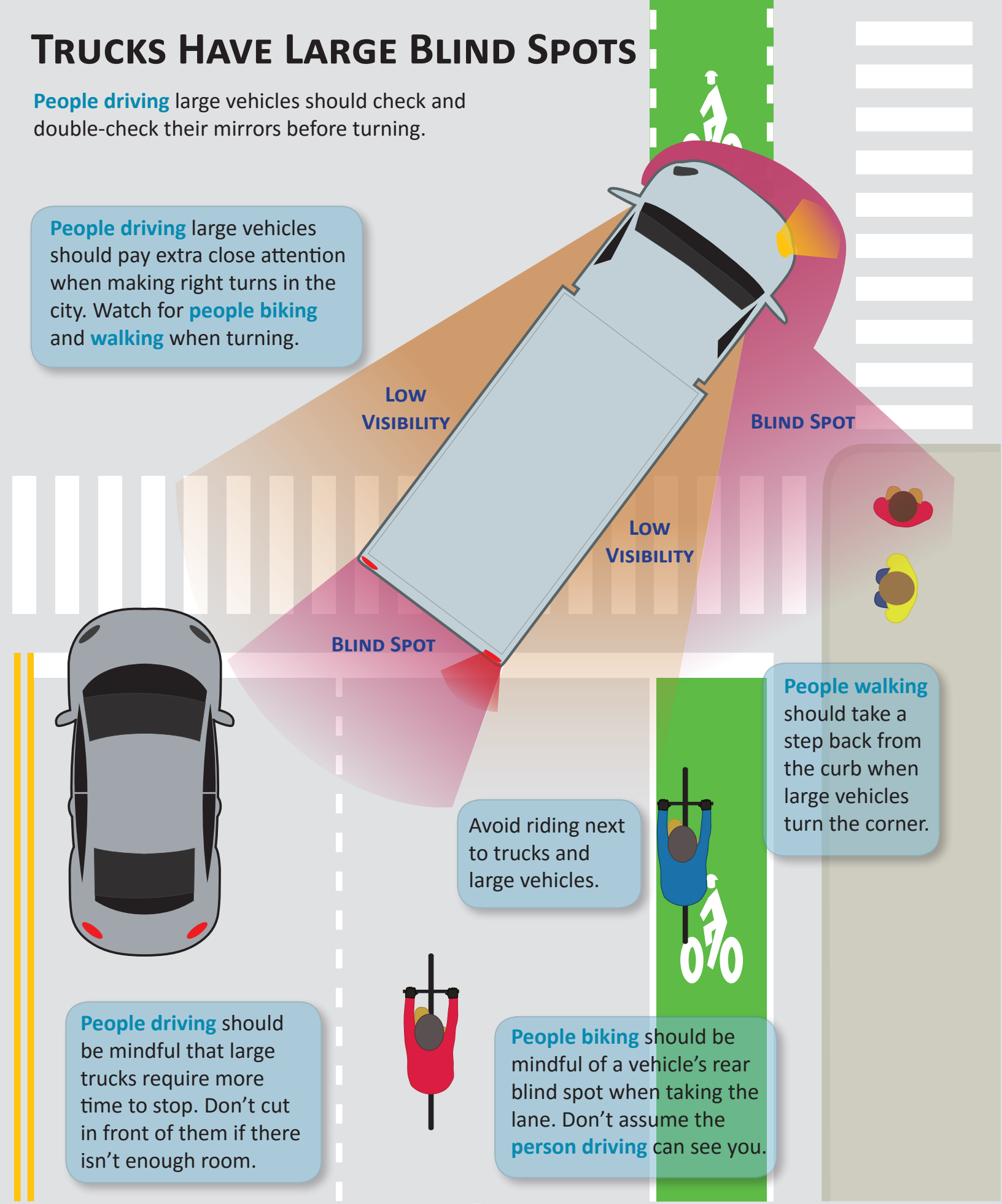
People biking should give buses plenty of room. Don't try to squeeze by buses on the right. Sometimes it's best to hang back and let buses re-enter the travel lane instead of trying to pass. Watch for **cars** approaching on your left.

People driving should leave enough space for buses to re-enter the travel lane. Watch for **bicyclists** who may take up the full lane.

Trucks Have Large Blind Spots

People driving large vehicles should check and double-check their mirrors before turning.

People driving large vehicles should pay extra close attention when making right turns in the city. Watch for **people biking** and **walking** when turning.



People walking should take a step back from the curb when large vehicles turn the corner.

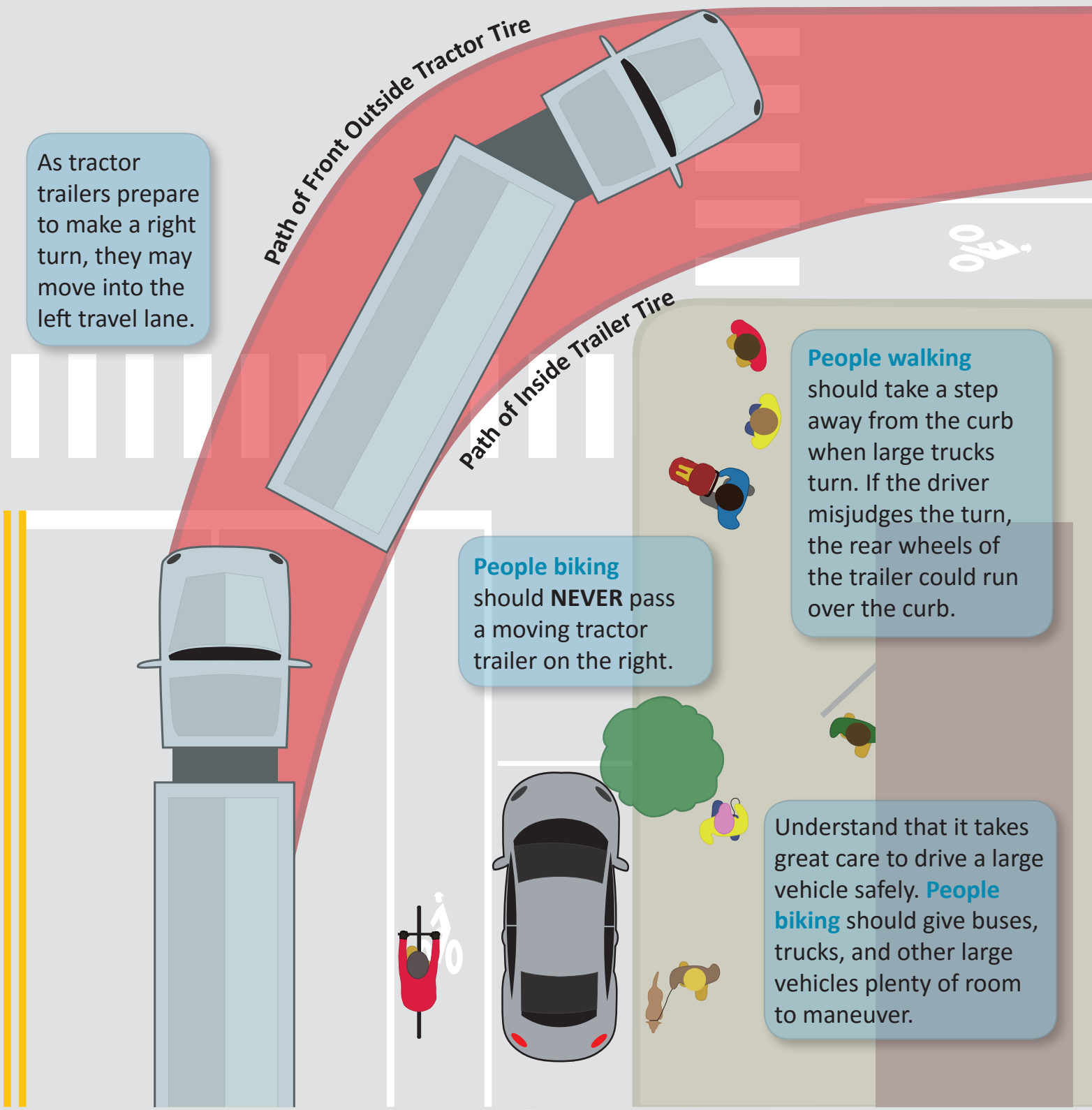
Avoid riding next to trucks and large vehicles.

People driving should be mindful that large trucks require more time to stop. Don't cut in front of them if there isn't enough room.

People biking should be mindful of a vehicle's rear blind spot when taking the lane. Don't assume the **person driving** can see you.

Turning Tractor Trailers

Tractor trailers require much more room to make a right turn than you might expect. **Everyone** should give them plenty of room and **people biking** should **NEVER** try to squeeze by them on the right.



Responsibility

We have a responsibility to **follow the rules** and **set a good example**. It's not just about you; we are all in this together.

People Driving

- Vehicles have the potential to inflict the most harm. **Be careful, pay attention,** and **slow down**.
- **Stop** behind the **stop line** or **bike box**. You won't get to your destination any faster by blocking the crosswalk or the bike box.
- When **turning right on red** is allowed, **BE CAREFUL!**
- Being on the road requires all your attention — don't pick up your cell phone, even at a red light.

People Biking

- Running red lights and stop signs without stopping is **dangerous** and **illegal**. Show some respect – **stop** and **put your foot down**.
- Be courteous of other people biking who are stopped at an intersection. **Wait your turn** – you wouldn't cut to the front of the grocery store line, so don't cut in front of other bicyclists.
- Use **lights** at **night**. Wear bright or reflective clothing. It's not only about seeing where you are going, it's about others seeing **YOU**.
- Ride in the **same direction as traffic**, unless otherwise marked. It's not worth the risk; take the extra time to ride correctly and predictably.

People Walking

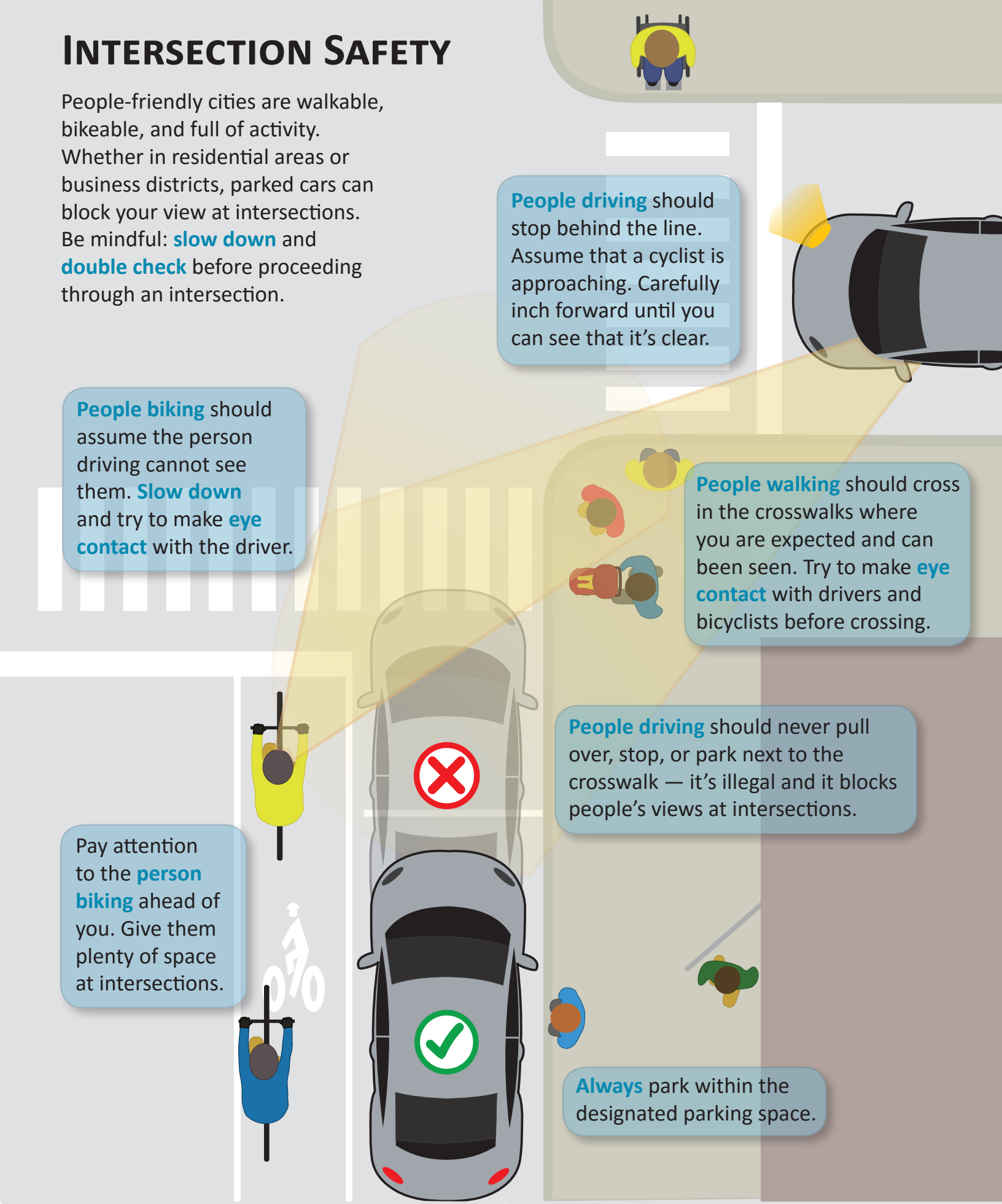
- Move off the shared path if you need to stop — **keep the path clear** for others.

People using Public transit

- After entering the train or bus, **move away from the door** and make room for others behind you.
- Allow people exiting buses and trains to do so first. You will have plenty of time to get on once they get off.
- Exiting through the rear door of the bus speeds up the ride for **ALL!**

Intersection Safety

People-friendly cities are walkable, bikeable, and full of activity. Whether in residential areas or business districts, parked cars can block your view at intersections. Be mindful: **slow down** and **double check** before proceeding through an intersection.

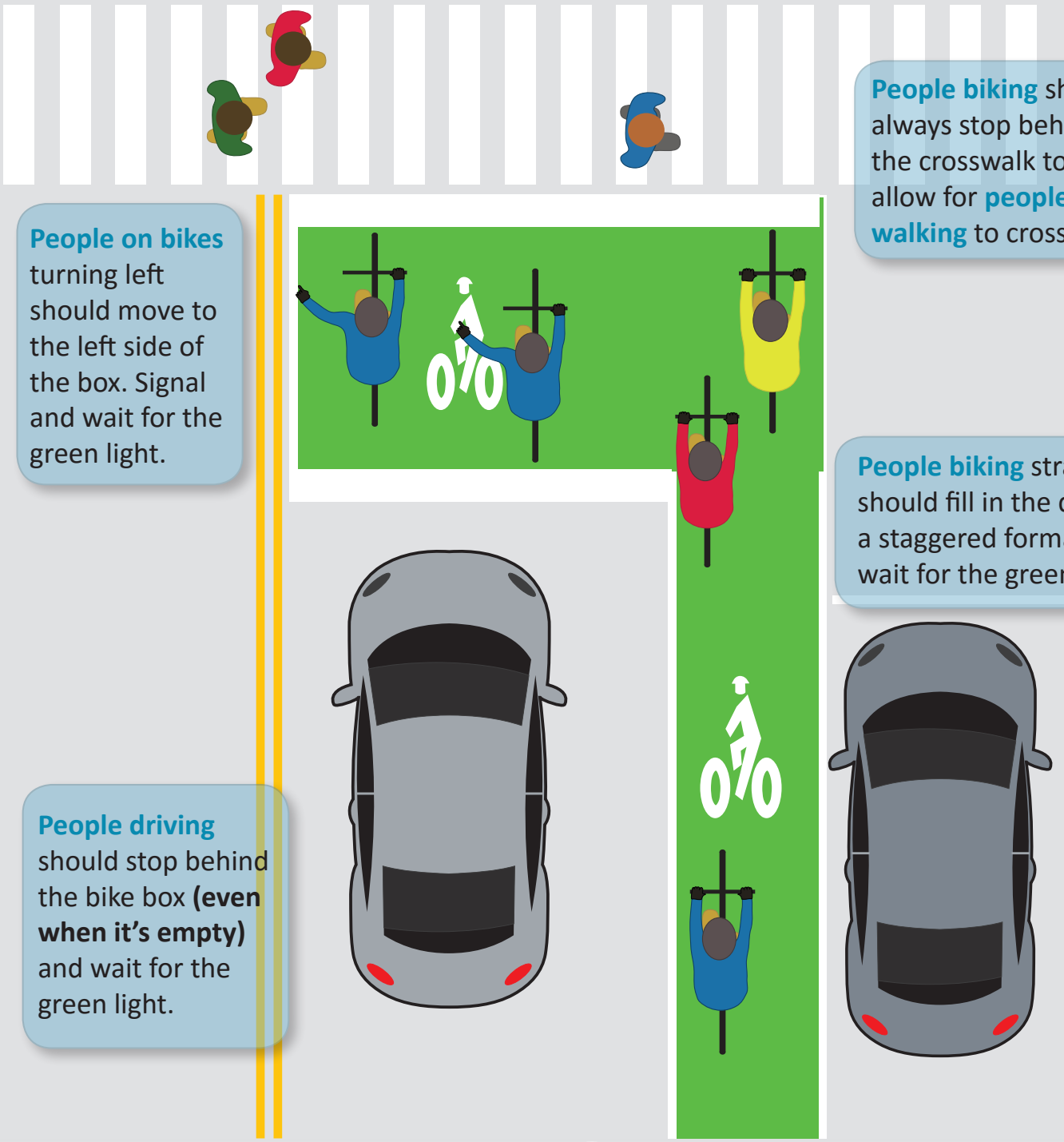


Shared Path Etiquette

Shared paths are used by many different people in many different ways. Follow these guidelines of how to share the path and enjoy your trip!

Bike Box Etiquette

Bike boxes are installed at intersections to give **people biking** a safe way to turn. When used correctly, bike boxes make intersections safer for **everyone**. Follow these guidelines when approaching a **red light** and avoid unnecessary frustration and confusion at the bike box.



Respect Others

Be courteous. Put yourself in someone else's shoes. Don't assume the worst. Take a deep breath. **Say thank you.** Even if you have the right of way, a little bit of gratitude goes a long way. Wave, smile, nod your head, give a thumbs up, sing them a song – **show some kindness** when someone does the same.

People Driving

- Don't honk unnecessarily at people biking and walking. It's loud and it's rude.
- Be patient when the light turns green – **allow bicyclists to clear the intersection** before going.
- Watch for areas of ponding in the rain. Slow down to **avoid splashing** someone walking, biking, or using a bus.

People Biking

- Yield to pedestrians and give them the right of way.
- Make your presence known as you pass. Say "On your left," "Passing" or just ring your bell.
- Give other bicyclists some room – **don't crowd**!
- Ride at **appropriate speeds** on shared paths and on streets. Slow down when approaching others.
- If you opt to ride on sidewalks where legal, you **must** ride at a walking speed and yield to pedestrians.

People Walking

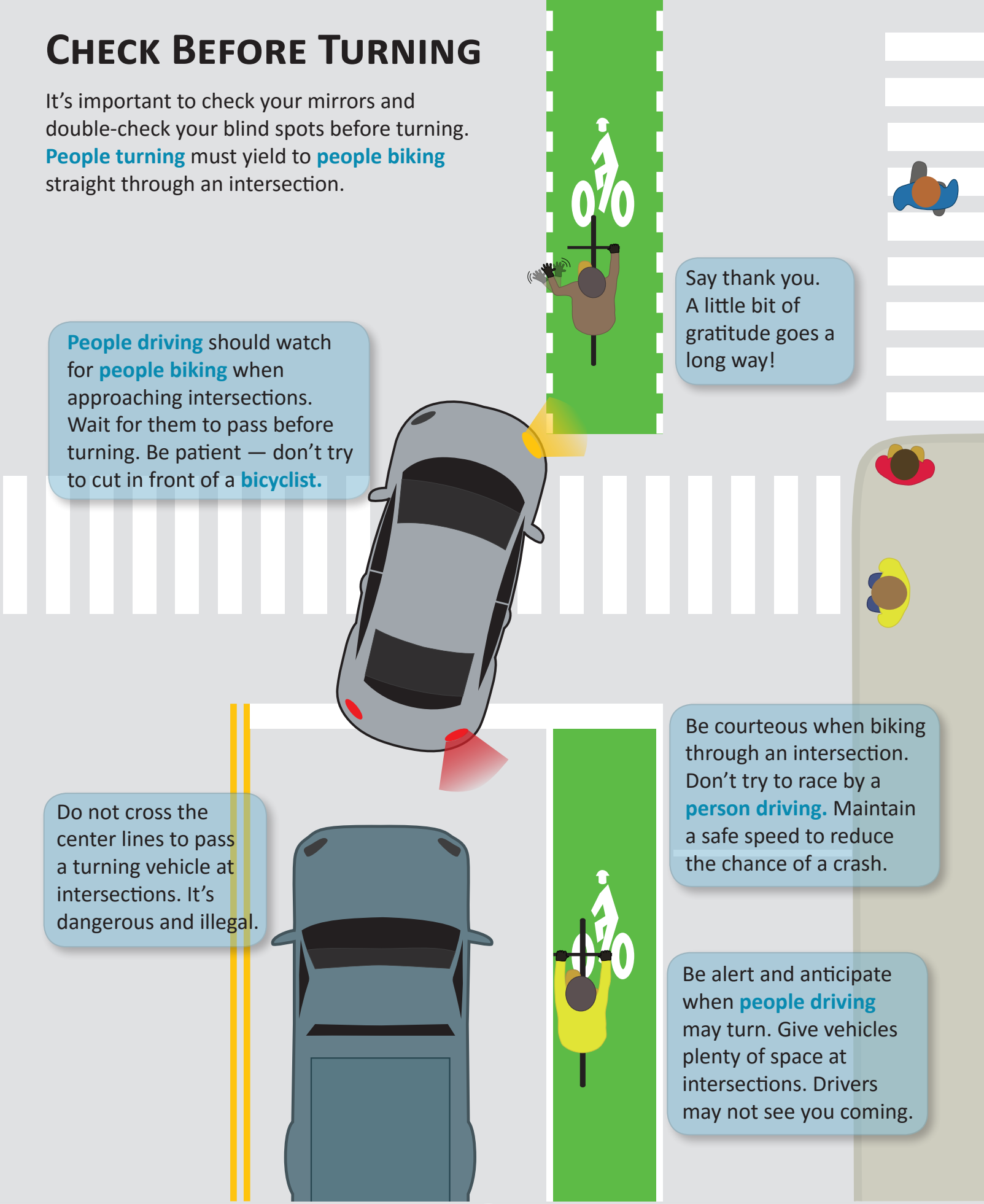
- Don't cross against the light.
- Keep your dogs on **short leashes** when using a shared path.
- Make sure kids **stay right** when using a **shared path**.

People using Public transit

- Keep phone calls and conversations to a **low** volume.
- Listening to music? **Use your headphones** and keep your music to yourself.
- Don't put your bags on the seat next to you.

Check Before Turning

It's important to check your mirrors and double-check your blind spots before turning. **People turning** must yield to **people biking** straight through an intersection.



Say thank you. A little bit of gratitude goes a long way!

People driving should watch for **people biking** when approaching intersections. Wait for them to pass before turning. Be patient — don't try to cut in front of a **bicyclist.**

Be courteous when biking through an intersection. Don't try to race by a **person driving.** Maintain a safe speed to reduce the chance of a crash.

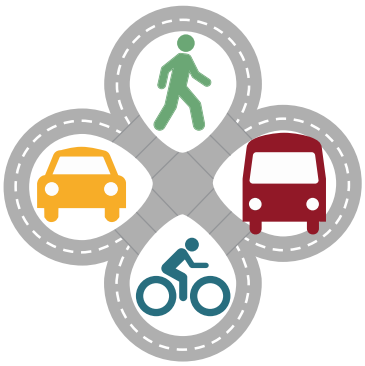
Do not cross the center lines to pass a turning vehicle at intersections. It's dangerous and illegal.

Be alert and anticipate when **people driving** may turn. Give vehicles plenty of space at intersections. Drivers may not see you coming.

Cambridge Resources

Make a Call

Emergency:	**9-1-1**
Police Non-Emergency:	**617-349-3300**
Community Development Department:	**617-349-4600**
Traffic, Parking & Transportation Department:	**617-349-4700**
Department of Public Works:	**617-349-4800**
Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR):	**617-626-1250**
MassDOT (Department of Transportation):	**77-MA-DOT-GOV**
MBTA:	**617-222-3200**



Submit a Report

Use **Commonwealth Connect App** or **Online** form to report:

- Street Defect or Pothole
- Sidewalk Defect
- Streetlight Defect
- Abandoned Bicycle
- Bike Rack Request
- Damaged Bike Rack
- Taxi Complaint
- Traffic Sign Complaint
- Traffic Signal Complaint

www.commonwealthconnect.io
To report a vehicle parked in a bike lane call **617-349-3300 or 617-349-4700**.

Find out more

Massachusetts Bicycle laws:
www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws
Part I, Title XIV, Chapter 85, Section 11B

Vision Zero:
www.cambridgema.gov/visionzero

Cambridge Traffic regulations:
www.cambridgema.gov/traffic/aboutus/trafficregulations

Walking in Cambridge:
www.cambridgema.gov/CDD

Biking in Cambridge:
www.cambridgema.gov/bikes

MBTA:
www.mbta.com

Hubway:
www.thehubway.com

Designated Business Districts:
www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/factsandmaps/mapgalleries/transportation

Cambridge Bike WikiMap
www.cambridgema.gov/CDD/Transportation/bikesincambridge/bicyclewikimap

Graphics: Marie Macchiarolo; Ambit Creative Group