

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON **September 30, 2015 at 7:00pm.**

Lafayette Road/Middle Street Bicycle Facilities  
Portsmouth, NH  
State Proj. No. 28757 (GPI Proj. No. MAX-2014051.00)

DATE PREPARED: October 9, 2015 (Revised October 29, 2015)

LOCATION: City Council Chambers, Portsmouth City Hall, 1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth

ATTENDEES: David Allen, Deputy City Manager, Portsmouth  
Jason DeGray, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.  
Eric Eby, Portsmouth DPW  
James Heinz, Deputy Fire Chief, Portsmouth Fire Department  
Joe Johnson, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.  
Bradley Lown, Chairman, Parking & Traffic Safety Committee  
Mary Lou McElwain, Parking & Traffic Safety Committee  
Peter Rice, Portsmouth DPW  
Juliet Walker, Portsmouth Planning Department  
Harold Whitehouse, Parking & Traffic Safety Committee  
See attached sign-in

PURPOSE: Preliminary Design Public Meeting

Discussion:

Ms. Walker began the presentation by providing the project's purpose & need, the history of the project and an update on the design process. She noted that the increase in protected bicycle lanes across the country has grown dramatically in the last few years. She also presented data showing the correlation of travel lane widths versus vehicular travel speeds. Ms. Walker also provided data relative to vehicular travel speeds versus the probability of a pedestrian fatality in the event of a collision. It was stressed that this safe routes to school project (FHWA funded) is intended to accommodate the vulnerable bicycle riders who might not otherwise be biking.

Mr. DeGray reviewed the recommended design alternative and described the various cross sections along the corridor starting from the southerly limit and working toward downtown. Any pinch points along the project were highlighted by Mr. DeGray.

After the presentations, the floor was opened for public comment. Following is a brief summary of those comments.

A resident, who had submitted written comment prior to the meeting, expressed the concern about the Greenleaf intersection relative to sight distance and the proposed bike lanes. It was noted that the City understands the many concerns with this intersection and intends to study this intersection as a separate project.

A Mendum Avenue resident (Steve) indicated that he bikes to work and felt the project would be great. Referencing a pedestrian bridge built within the City, he said 'if you build it, they will come' implying that

the project will promote and encourage cycling. He noted that he was part of the Portsmouth Listens Committee some 20 years ago and he is excited to see the City become more aggressive with the bicycle implementation. In general he appreciated the plan.

Another Mendum Avenue resident (Bob) indicated that he currently avoids Middle Road as a biker due to safety concerns. He pointed out that every bike trip that is completed will be one less vehicle on the roadway as well as one less parking space required downtown. He asked if an analysis was completed to determine what could be expected in terms of the reduction of vehicles on the road. Mr. DeGray indicated that an analysis was not completed and that there is not a great amount of data available at this time to complete such studies. Ms. Walker noted that communities are encouraged to perform before and after studies in order to build such databases for future projects.

A resident (Stacy) asked if this style/type of bike facility was going to atypical for the City or if it will be used again on future projects. Ms. Walker responded that this type of bike lane will be proposed on future projects and that once the first one is constructed, further implementation of the same type of facility should be easier since the public will have a better understanding of the operations. Buffered bike lanes and bike boxes will become more common in the City as projects seek to make bicycle users more comfortable.

A resident (Larry) noted that he participated in the pop-up demonstration. While he was biking in the protected bike lane (adjacent to parked cars) a left turning vehicle almost cut him off. He was concerned about the ability of vehicle drivers to see bikers in the protected bike lane behind parked cars. He also noted that dooring is a serious problem and a concern. Mr. DeGray agreed that dooring is a serious consideration and one benefit of having bike lanes on the passenger side is the lower probability of a door opening on that side. The alternative is to have the bike lane on the driver side where there is a 100% chance that a door will open at least once after parking. Mr. DeGray also said that the design will consider widening the buffer adjacent to the passenger side of the parked vehicles from 2' to 3'. Restricting parking to a further extent from the intersections is one way to improve sight distance as bikers approach these intersections and care try to pull out of side streets.

A resident (Tom) said that he walks Middle Road every day and vehicles are moving too fast. He applauds the proposed project.

A resident (Harold) asked if the project will improve left turn movements out of the side streets. Mr. DeGray indicated that left turns out of the side streets will be easier especially along the side of Route 1 where the on-street parking has been eliminated. This is a result of the improved sight lines. Also, in general, there will be slower vehicles speeds along the corridor which means that less sight distance will be required for vehicles taking left turns anywhere along the corridor. So the project will provide benefit to the side streets turns. A reduction in travel speeds is an objective of the project and lower travel speeds were observed during the pop-up demonstration.

A resident (Susan) had concerns with the elimination of parking. Where will the mail man park? She also had concerns with the winter conditions and the fact that lanes get smaller and smaller as snow piles form. She does not think that kids will feel safe biking down Lafayette/Middle and that they will use the side streets.

A Mendum Ave resident noted that she bikes everywhere and that any project that can draw attention to bikes on the roadway is a positive improvement.

A resident (Daryl) said that he always bikes into downtown both alone and with his family. He said that his kids would use the proposed bike lanes once implemented. He said that he loves the design.

A resident (Bob) noted that he is a relatively new resident of the City and is biking this corridor often. His general comment was that bike facility projects, such as this, help to define the places where bikes and cars belong on the roadway. Otherwise, without any striping, cars and bikes don't always know where to position themselves. Often times when a road has no shoulder striping, vehicles will over exaggerate when passing by encroaching on the opposing travel lane. This is not necessary. Striped bike facilities provide more information to all road users.

A resident (Doug) took great notice of the slower vehicular travel speeds along Lafayette/Middle during the pop-up demonstration. Having a group of folks comfortably congregated near the roadway, is not typically seen in the present configuration. The striping/buffers made a difference.

A resident asked how snow removal would be handled. City staff indicated that any vertical element such as a bollard (if implemented) would be removed during winter months and the snow would be removed accordingly. The City is committed to snow removal on any public roadway and this would be no exception.

One resident made a suggestion regarding the narrow section along the corridor where no buffer could be provided. She suggested that the bike lane in that area be painted green. Mr. DeGray agreed this was an excellent suggestion.

Mr. Whitehouse asked if the project would get approval from the Federal Highway Administration given that it is US Route 1. City staff said that this section of Route 1 is under City jurisdiction and does not need federal approval although funding is through a federal grant. The project is in the spirit of the complete street guide that FHWA has adopted. This project may shift vehicles to the Route 1 By-Pass if the improvements were an inconvenience. This would not be a negative consequence.

A resident (Brian) noted that is a very busy corridor for emergency vehicles. How would vehicles pull out of the way if an emergency vehicle were responding to a call? The City has worked very closely with the emergency personnel on this project to maximize the roadway width to allow vehicles to pull over. Any proposed vertical elements (bollards) would be mountable for a vehicle to pull out of the way. Mr. Heinz noted that an unintended consequence of the project may be slower response times.

Concern with the intersection of Greenleaf was raised again. City staff indicated that an independent review of the intersection will be considered.

Mr. Heinz requested that when a right side buffer is warranted, maybe the left side buffer could be widened to allow more space for vehicles to pull over for emergency vehicles.

GPI is going to look at the blocks where parking is proposed to see if one side of Route 1 makes more sense than the other. This could be related to the number of driveways, the curvature of the roadway, etc.

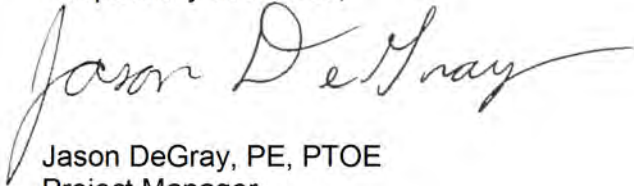
Roll plans were present at the meeting to allow attendees to make comments. The following was noted on the plan:

- Difficult left turn from Wibird Street. Visibility issues.
- Difficult left turn from Cass Street.
- Could a two-way bike facility be implemented from South Street to Andrew Jarvis?

Attached to these minutes is the sign in sheet. Also attached are written comments obtained the night of the meeting as well as subsequent to the meeting.

These minutes constitute my recollection of the Preliminary Design Public Meeting to the best of my knowledge. Please advise me within ten (10) days, in writing, of any exceptions or corrections.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason DeGray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jason DeGray, PE, PTOE  
Project Manager

cc: City Staff Attendees

# Sign-In 9/30/15

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Contact</u> (e-mail/phone)
Larry Lariviere	11 Larry Ln	LJLCWTC@AOL.com
Harold Whitehouse	Humphrey Ct	—
James Heinz	170 Court St.	jbheinz@cityofportsmouth.com
Brian & Judy McCarthy	2436 Lafayette Rd	JKM243@live.com
Mary M Keenan	" " " and Rye Hl	
Marylou McElwain	259 South St	m259@comcast.net
Lisa & Ric Maurer	4 Caswell Dr. Greenland	<del>MAURER@comcast.net</del> LMAURER@comcast.net
Janet Polasty	62 Mendum	Janet.Polasty@gmail.com
William Lyons	62 Mendum Ave.	Wm.Lyons@ <del>comcast.net</del> comcast.net
Jay S. Smith	397 Lafayette Rd	jsmith@caci.com
Tom Morgan	39 Richards	
Dan Rawling	411 Middle St.	dau@rawlingdesign.com
Eric Weinrieb	9 Middle Road	ERIC@ALTUS-ENG.COM
Paul Cragnoline	50 Oakwood Drive	peragnoline@comcast.net
Bob White	22 Miller Ave	Rwhite <sup>50</sup> @gmail.com
Stacy Lonergan	99 Boyd Rd	Stacy123@gmail.com
Doug Roberts	247 Richards Ave	
Karen Jacoby	35 W. Bird St	KJacoby35@gmail.com
Susan Densberg	44 W. Bird St	
Timothy Wheelock	44 W. Bird St	
Steve SANKER	57 Mendum Av.	stevesankerbrands.com
Sue Allen	383 Union St	ssallen53@gmail.com
David Allen	383 Union St	dallen@cityofportsmouth.com

-----Original Message-----

From: Brent Schmitt [<mailto:bschmitt@apttus.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, September 23, 2015 3:26 PM

To: Juliet T.H. Walker <[jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com)>

Subject: 622 middle street bike path feedback, pics attached

Hi Juliet,

Thank you for the call today.

I wanted to reiterate that neither I nor my downstairs neighbor support the removal of the two parking spots in front of our house at 622 Middle Street for the bike path. My neighbor has a handicapped elderly mother and I have two young children and without the 2 parking spots in front of our house, we both would need to park, at a minimum, 150 feet away from our house and we would also have to walk across a very busy Middle Street to get to/from our cars. I think the last thing the city would want on its hands is a vehicle on middle street to hit and injure a handicapped, elderly mother or one of my children because our parking spots were removed for a bike path.

Additionally, there is already almost no parking near our house (see pics below) and when it snows the parking spots in front of our house are the only practical places to park within 500 feet.

I can think of a number of potential options to resolve this: 1) start the bike path after our house so that our parking spots are not seized. 2) put painted line bike paths on both sides of the street so that our parking is not seized, etc.

I support a bike path but in a way that positively impacts everyone. We will be living in this house for the next 60 years and we pay a tremendous amount of money in property taxes. I want to ensure that this situation is resolved.

No parking on Cass Street for about 100 feet.



**From:** Wes Tator <[wes@2bgreenprofitably.com](mailto:wes@2bgreenprofitably.com)>  
**Date:** September 28, 2015 at 6:34:56 AM EDT  
**To:** "Peter H. Rice" <[phrice@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:phrice@cityofportsmouth.com)>, "Juliet T.H. Walker" <[jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com)>  
**Subject:** **Bicycle lanes along Middle Street**

Good Morning,

It was wonderful to see what the bicycle lanes can be on Saturday morning. Since I am not sure I can make the public meeting, I am writing to share some thoughts.

As someone who lives on Middle Street and who rides his bike throughout Portsmouth, I have a lot at stake in this conversation. From watching the traffic over the past 7 months or so, I have noticed that, on balance, the automobile traffic occurs more like a highway and less like it is moving through a bicycle/pedestrian neighborhood than is appropriate. The bicycle lanes, as designed will serve to calm this pattern. In addition, it is very apparent that our streets are designed for automobiles and need to be "friendlier" for bicycles now and more so going forward.

As designed the bicycles lanes are much easier to navigate than the current situation of riding along an undefined edge of the street. This will both be safer and encourage more bicycle use within the City.

While I am sympathetic to the needs of the Fire Department, I believe that those needs must bend to the current and future requirements of the community. What I would like to see is a Fire Department that intentionally gets behind the transformation of our streets and offers solutions to its needs consistent with the direction that the community is going with respect to bicycles.

Thank you for the work you are doing and considering my perspective.

Wes Tator, MBA, LEED AP  
cell, 603-661-2867

NH Real Estate  
350 Route 108, Suite 210  
Somersworth, NH 03867

2 B Green Profitably  
411 Middle Street  
Portsmouth, NH 03801-5053  
[wes@2bgreenprofitably.com](mailto:wes@2bgreenprofitably.com)

**"This is the true joy in life being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one..." George Bernard Shaw.**

**By 2025 humankind will be contributing to the well being of the planet as evidenced by the decline of CO2 in the atmosphere.**



9/28/15

Memo for the Record

To Whom It May Concern  
Attn: Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.

Subject: Abutter Feedback re: BIKE LANES

1. As you are probably well aware, the intersection of Greenleaf and Lafayette is complicated. The addition of bike lanes on both sides of Lafayette will aggravate the dangerous situation that already exists unless careful thought is applied. This careful thought can best be addressed by a formal traffic study but it MUST be done early in the morning and then throughout the day during the weekdays that school is in session and during the days (including Sunday) when cars are entering and leaving Seacoast Community Church on 397 Lafayette Road. I would specifically ask that the persons doing the traffic study observe the movement of vehicles by positioning themselves at the EXIT area from Seacoast Community Church (see attached) and visualize yourself in a car turning right (least risk), going straight (high risk) and turning left (moderate risk).
2. The situation is aggravated by a lack of a turning lane into the church for cars driving South. Today this forces following cars to go off the pavement to get by a car going into the church or wait patiently until the turning car completes his turn which sometimes can be minutes as one waits for a benevolent driver to let them go in. But most people are impatient and elect to go around the turning car and drive onto what in the future may be a bike lane. If a bike lane is put on both sides of this particular intersection, it is going to definitely create a traffic jam at various times during the day. Additionally Seacoast Community Church is not a "Sunday Only" destination. It hosts a Preschool five days a week, a Soup Kitchen for the needy every Tuesday from approx. 10am to approx 1pm and a Food Pantry for the community every day by appointment. There is a faith-based weight loss program on Mondays, bible studies open to the community during the daytime on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Also, special events such as this years "Trunk or Treat" (a safe Trick or Treat alternative open to the community) are held throughout the year.
3. Some suggested alternatives include:
  - a. Maximize bike traffic crossing at the intersection of South and Lafayette where appropriate lighting and crosswalks can be installed or upgraded more readily. In other words, encourage student bikers to enter the school premises via Summit Street. Realistically the addition of bike lanes from that intersection onto South Street to where Summit begins may be inopportune so students may have to walk their bikes the 100 yards to the school entrance at Summit Street.

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*"Joining God's Great Adventure"*

**Seacoast Community Church**

397 Lafayette Road, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Ph. (603) 436-8623 Fax (603) 436-8543

www.sccnh.com



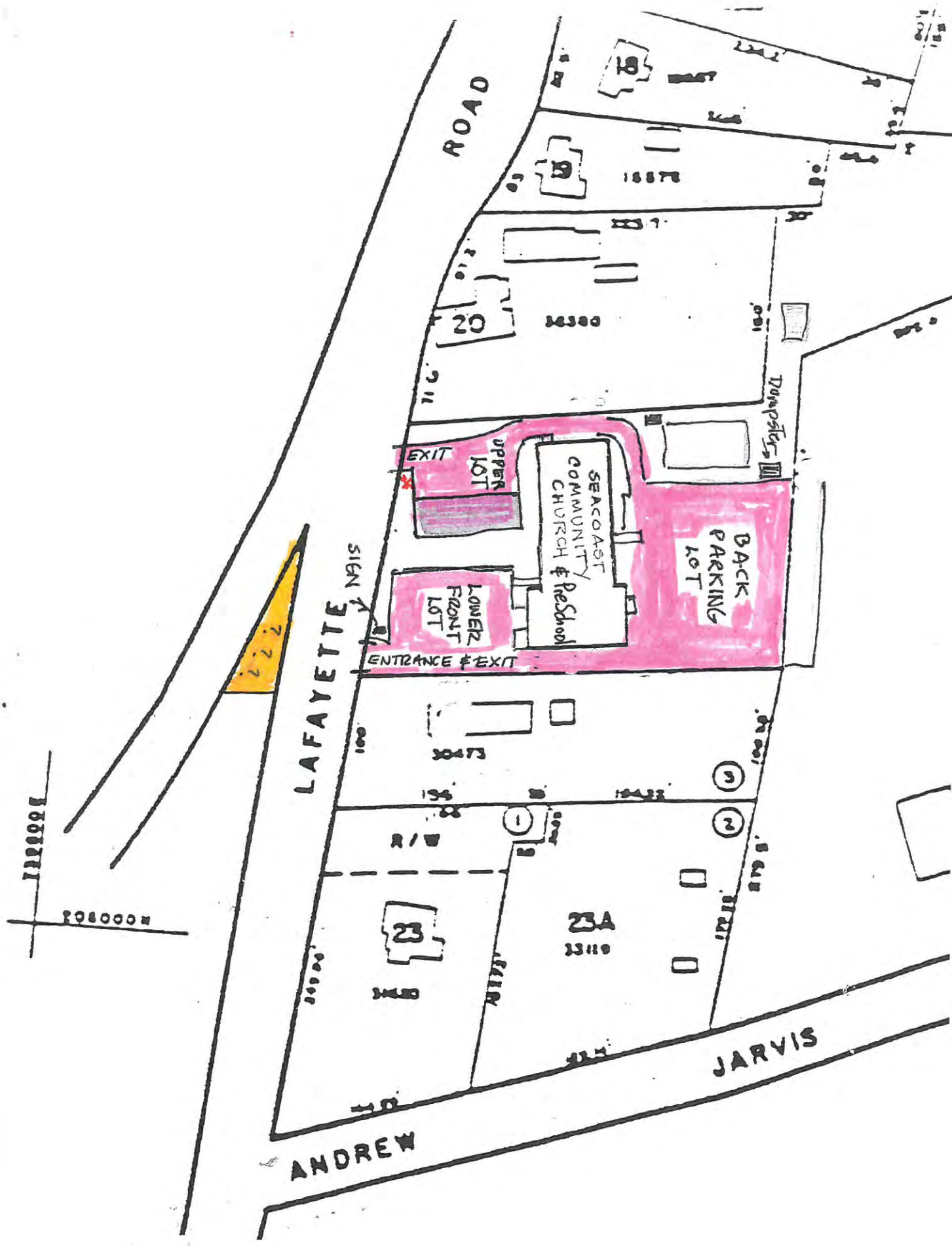
- b. Try to revise the street plan where Greenleaf meets Lafayette by maximizing or creating new vehicular turn lanes on Greenleaf to accommodate cars wanting to go North (left) or South (right) onto Lafayette Road. This suggestion may be beyond the scope of this bike lane project but this intersection is the worst in the city and deserves redesign regardless of the desire to accommodate bikers. Also I recommend your traffic study include a visit to the Police Dept to determine how many reported accidents have occurred at this intersection. This may lend additional ammunition (or insights) to the cause. Acquisition by eminent domain or by an easement of the unused portion of the corner lot (see orange section of attached map) and relocating the telephone pole may be a starting point.
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4. If we have a repeat of the winter of 2014/2015, I presume all bike lanes will be "decommissioned" for the greater good of vehicular safety. School is usually closed when snow is anticipated so restricting access to bike lanes on fair weather days would not be unreasonable although human nature may be hard to legislate.

Regrettably I cannot attend the meeting this Wednesday night so I made twenty copies. Feel free to distribute this memo to those with a need to know. I can best be reached by cell phone at 603-812-7595 or email at: [jsmith@caci.com](mailto:jsmith@caci.com).

Sincerely yours



Jay Smith  
Trustee  
Seacoast Community Church  
397 Lafayette Road



LAFAYETTE ROAD

ANDREW

JARVIS

UPPER LOT

LOWER FRONT LOT

BACK PARKING LOT

SEACOAST COMMUNITY CHURCH & Preschool

ENTRANCE & EXIT

SIGN

DUMPSTER

ROAD

ROAD

23

23A

1

2

3

1

2

3

EXIT

EXIT

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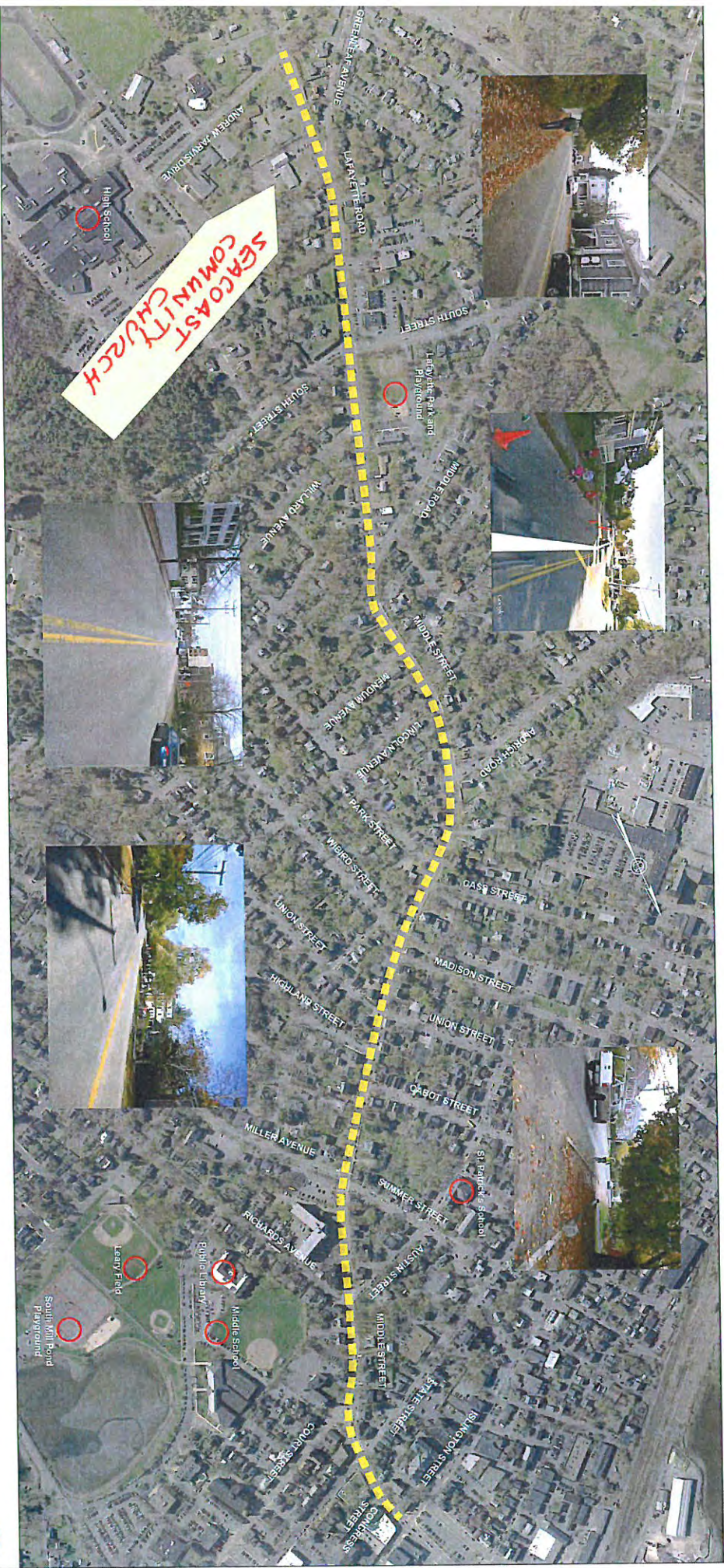
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SEACOAST COMMUNITY CHURCH

LAFAYETTE ROAD/MIDDLE STREET  
PORTSMOUTH, NH





# *Peter J. Loughlin*

ATTORNEY AT LAW

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September 29, 2015

**VIA EMAIL:**

Juliet T. H. Walker, AICP  
Transportation Planner  
Planning Department  
City of Portsmouth  
1 Junkins Avenue  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Rick Taintor, Planning Director  
City of Portsmouth  
1 Junkins Avenue  
Portsmouth, NH 03801

**Re: Middle Street Bike Lanes**

Dear Juliet & Rick:

Neither of you will consider me to be completely unbiased, however, I was favorably impressed with the bike lane tests that you conducted on Middle Street on Saturday morning, September 25<sup>th</sup>.

The present configuration of Middle Street reflects the thinking of the 1950s that wider and faster is always better. I am not sure why, but as a fairly young kid, I remember hearing my neighbor, the late City Manager Robert C. Violet, announce on the radio that the City had received funding to widen Middle Street and that this would be a great new entrance to the City. He assured residents that while the project would result in the removal of significant numbers of trees that were lining the street, all of the trees would be replaced. In fact, none of the trees were replaced until that late 1960s when Clotilde Straus, Charlie Vaughan and Sam Maddock started the City's tree planting program.

Juliet T.H. Walker  
Rick Taintor  
September 29, 2015  
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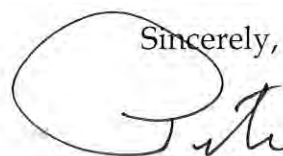
As you know, even though Middle Street is wider than almost any street in the City, residents regularly drive over the curb to park their automobiles for fear of collision with high speed traffic on Middle Street.

I had not been able to envision how it would be possible to have a bike lane and parking. The demonstration area between Aldrich Road and Park Street answered my questions. I thought that was an excellent way to have both parking and a bike lane. Having cars parked between the bike lane and the travel portion seems to give riders added protection.

When we talked on Saturday, it was my understanding that concerns had been raised as to the width of pavement that would result if bike lanes were created. I can't remember the numbers that were stated as being necessary for safe passage of fire equipment, however, on Sunday morning at approximately 4:45 a.m., I used a tape measure to determine the width of Court Street. By my measurements, Court Street (near the Hotel Portsmouth), has two approximately 13' travel lanes and an 8' parking space. In the area of 161 Court Street (immediately to the west of the Central Fire Station), there is an approximately 13' travel lane on the west bound side and a 10' travel lane on the east bound side, along with an 8' parking lane. Since all equipment responding from the Central Fire Station for the last seven or eight decades has managed to safely negotiate Court Street without any major problems (that I am aware of), I am not sure why a wider travel area is required on Middle Street than exists on Court Street.

I would appreciate if you would keep me posted on the progress of the bike lane matter.

Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Sincerely,  


Peter J. Loughlin

PJL/dea

PJL2015\2015-09-29 Ltr to Walker & Taintor Re Middle Street Bike Lane



## Johnson, Joseph

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**From:** Juliet T.H. Walker <jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, September 29, 2015 4:02 PM  
**To:** DeGray, Jason; Johnson, Joseph  
**Subject:** Fwd: Bicycle lane options

*Juliet T. H. Walker, AICP  
Transportation Planner  
Planning Department  
City of Portsmouth  
1 Junkins Avenue  
Portsmouth, NH 03801  
(603) 610-7296  
[www.planportsmouth.com](http://www.planportsmouth.com)  
Twitter: @PlanPortsmouth*

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Roland Goodbody <[roland.goodbody@gmail.com](mailto:roland.goodbody@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** September 29, 2015 at 2:20:23 PM EDT  
**To:** "Juliet T.H. Walker" <[jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com](mailto:jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com)>  
**Subject:** Bicycle lane options

Firstly, congratulations to the city for the Bicycle Friendly Community Bronze Level award. That's good news. Eventually we'll get a gold!

I participated in the ride-through of the various options for bike lanes on Middle Street Saturday morning, but was too early to indicate my preference, so I'm hoping I can do so through you. I think overall that the most buffered bike lane, the one with parked cars as a buffer, will be the safest in the long run and so that gets my vote. I liked the wider biker lane without the parked cars, but unless it had some kind of permanent buffer, rather than potted plants and easily damaged bollards, I think it would feel unsafe after a time.

Thanks.

Roland Goodbody  
85 Austin Street  
Portsmouth



Public Meeting  
Middle Street/Lafayette Road

September 30, 2015

We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please leave your contact information if you wish in case we need clarification on any of your comments:

Name: Mary McEachern Keenan

Email: 90 243 Lafayette Rd

Re: Bike Lane

Comments: I object to losing on street parking south of Aldrich Rd.

The South St & Lafayette Rd presents a traffic nightmare for safety vehicles at the lights

the loss of on street parking, represents a loss of assessment value.

You may also provide comments directly on the roll plans provided at the meeting. Please leave this comment form in the 'comment envelope'.

Thank you!