

Conceptual Alternatives Public Meeting

Middle Street/Lafayette Road

February 12, 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: Lily Bayer

Email: lbayer@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: this is my preferred option. Safer for everyone.
Narrower ~~space~~ travel lanes? (Maybe w/ paint stripe to
West?)

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: 2nd best. It would definitely be an improvement
over the existing conditions.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: How is this better than what we have now?

Please note which concept you prefer by placing one of the large circular stickers on the plan of your choice.

Thank you!

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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: Grace Lessner

Email: _____

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: _____
Have biked on this type of track in Montreal & loved it.
This is the safest concept for bikers & all. Thanks.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: _____

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: _____

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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 Lou McEneaney

Email: ml259@comcast.net

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: _____

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: _____

would like both concepts Study
studied for this corridor

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: NOT SAFE!

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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: Doug Roberts

Email: doug.roberts@portsmouthnh.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: like this one somewhat concerning about the
need for drivers to look left for cyclists.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: OKay

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: This one is inadequate for the goal of making
Middle St. safe for school children

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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: Dan Rawling

Email: dan@rawlingdesign.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: ruins 1 side of street - not driver/user
intuitive - requires overly conscious alertness for
users - drivers -

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: good concept - yet ruins 1 side of street -
needs to be balanced - sidewalk, bike, park, drive
each side of street -

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: unsafe -
user error potential great w/ significant
consequences

Please note which concept you prefer by placing one of the large circular stickers on the plan of your choice.

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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: Brian Early
Email: brianearly@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: This nice, but these always seem kind of slow when riders are trying to pass one another. Also, with the socialness of Portsmouth, I foresee traffic jams of people seeing their friends stopping & chatting.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: I like this design the best only if riders respect the correct directions, which I fear they won't be.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: The other designs are much cooler when thinking about riding in three seasons, but I think this will be the best design in four seasons, especially for winters like this one. Middle Road needs to be a main corridor during the worst of winters.

Please note which concept you prefer by placing one of the large circular stickers on the plan

of your choice.
Lastly, I wonder if Middle Road is the best street to encourage children cycling. ~~The~~ Portsmouth has a great number of side streets that could be made into ^{Thank you!} ~~big~~ bicycle thoroughfares without intruding on the artery that Middle St is

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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: SUG Allen

Email: SAllen3538@comcast.net

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: I don't like the idea of both directions on one side. It forces kids on the other side to cross over to get in the bike lanes.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: This is my concept of choice. The kids are protected by the parked cars going to school.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: Least favorite - no protection

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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: GERRY DUFFY

Email: GDUFFY44@GMAIL.COM

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments:

Please seriously consider as a beginning for traffic calming — pedestrian/cyclist controlled lights, maybe 2 or 3, between the main lights @ Miller + South

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments:

Thanks!
Really exciting!

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments:

Please note which concept you prefer by placing one of the large circular stickers on the plan of your choice.

Thank you!

February 20, 2015 2:01AM

[Print Page](#)

City should move forward with buffered bike paths

Feb. 19 — To the Editor:

Thanks to the sustained efforts of residents, Portsmouth is on the verge of an historic breakthrough, one that will bring the city into the fold of other communities that have rebalanced their transportation infrastructure to better accommodate non-vehicular traffic. It should be obvious by now that the more Portsmouth residents who are able to safely walk, bike, jog, or push strollers around town, the more we will gain from a wide range of benefits: personal health, environmental health, and pride in a civic structure suitable for the 21st century. Years of input from citizens (Portsmouth Listens, charrettes, etc.) have made it abundantly clear that a large number of Portsmouth residents favor substantially improved bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.

The work and citizen advocacy has brought us to the point where the Portsmouth Planning Department now has a “Safe Routes to School” grant-funded actionable plan, ready for implementation as soon as in the fall. This flagship project focuses on the key corridor for many of the city’s families and students: the Middle Street/Lafayette Road stretch from Richards Avenue to Andrew Jarvis drive. This corridor, if rendered safe for cyclists, would open up the possibility, for generations to come, of countless trips back and forth to school for large numbers of the city’s children and their parents.

Of the three options on the table at the recent City Hall presentation, residents overwhelmingly favored the option that would provide a “bike track,” a dedicated two lane bike path, on the east side of the corridor. The path would be buffered on one side by the sidewalk and on the other — and this is the key shift and innovation for our town — a marked buffer zone between the path and parked cars on a narrower road. The buffer is absolutely essential in providing not only real safety (i.e. drivers swinging car doors open) but also the critical feeling of security. There is no way I would let a young child of mine ride down Middle Street on a “traditional” bike lane. The speed of traffic and lack of a buffer would make it far too risky. But I would let my kid ride on a dedicated, buffered, two-lane path.

There’s no financial cost to the city for this project but there are other concerns. A handful of parking spaces might be lost. Conceivably, vehicular trips into and out of town might take an extra 30 seconds. In some places it might indeed be a tight fit for emergency vehicles. But their crews are amazing and we know they can do it. Just look around at the extreme conditions they are dealing with right now in our snow-narrowed streets.

Other communities that have successfully implemented these kinds of infrastructure improvements have had exactly the same issues. A collaborative effort between planners and emergency services, whose concerns are completely understandable and laudable, is essential. After all, our taxes pay for the salaries and work of city employees in all departments and it’s reasonable to expect them to work together for a pragmatic and positive outcome for the benefit of the

entire community. Emergency services, while extremely important, are, after all, one part of a complex picture. The residents of Portsmouth have been very clear about where they want their city to go. They want and expect change, change we shouldn't fear but welcome.

If you have a stake in this issue please contact city officials and let them know your thoughts. If we don't take advantage of this opportunity now, it'll be a long time before we have another chance. And parents will continue to taxi their kids to school. They could be out in the fresh air, getting some exercise.

Gerald Duffy

Portsmouth

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20150220/NEWS/150229958>

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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: Rich Matthes

Email: matthes.rich@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: My Favorite in many ways especially for
kid friendly approach. I am concerned about
it being too unfamiliar to visiting drivers

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: Best Concept in my opinion, protects cyclists &
is less confusing to visiting and local drivers

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: ~~But~~ This concept is dangerous
doors hit & kill cyclists

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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: Christopher David

Email: chris@leoninglabs.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track



Comments:

If feasible re cost, & if first responders' concerns can be addressed, then please "go big or go home". I for one will be willing to volunteer web design/dev/marketing to any community educational efforts. I live on Middle St & will

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments:

be happy w/ any of these plans & will use the lanes myself. Prefer the most kid- & family-friendly plan.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments:

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We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please e-mail this form to jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com.

Name: Matt Glenn

Email: matthglenn@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: I feel that a two-way track on one side of the road can cause more confusion for drivers who are used to
looking in one direction for oncoming traffic. Because of the number of street crossings, I don't think this is a good
option for Middle/Lafayette.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: This is my top choice. The loss of parking is not significant, and this would make a much safer bike route.
I bike this rode occasionally, and would ride on it more.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: This is also an ok option for me (speaking as an experienced bike commuter) but not a great option for kids
getting to school, families, etc. Definitely an improvement over what exists, but we should take the opportunity to do the
best option.

Thank you!

Conceptual Alternatives Public Meeting

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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: Diane Stradling

Email: diane.stradling@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: Concerned that serious cyclists will still want to ride with traffic, not against it.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: Yes, feels ~~a~~ safest need more crosswalks & maybe traffic light between South + Miller, perhaps Union since its the only intersection

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: too dangerous - cars opening doors

Please note which concept you prefer by placing one of the large circular stickers on the plan of your choice.

Thank you!

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Nick Allen <nick.allen@innerbridge.com>
Sent: Friday, February 27, 2015 12:53 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Middle St / Lafayette Rd Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Project

Hi Juliet,

I recently reviewed your plans for the Middle St / Lafayette Rd Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Project. First of all, very well done. I applaud your effort and attention to detail. I also appreciate how inviting you have been to public feedback.

Of the options presented on the site, I am most in favor of Option B - with protect cycling lanes on either side of the road. I cycle to work almost every day - except for this past February - due to the weather. For the most part, I find cycling in Portsmouth to be fairly safe. There are enough people on bikes that drivers are aware of them. However, I have had enough close calls with cars to know that a physical divider between the bike lanes and cars is in the best interest of public safety. I was in Europe recently and saw the same concept in place there, and it worked very well (in terms of everyone clearly understanding where they should be).

Regardless of which plan you select, I think, a communications strategy is equally important for both cyclists and drivers.

Cyclists:

- Code of conduct/responsibility (obey stop signs/lights, pedestrians, one-way streets, etc.). I would support ticketing cyclists for breaking traffic laws.
- Equipment: helmets, lights, reflectors

Motorists:

- where there are not bike lanes, 3' is the state law for passing (runners, cyclists, etc.) Most drivers don't know this law.
- Accountability and consequences for car/pedestrian/cyclist accidents. Any incident involving a vehicle and a pedestrian/cyclist is going to favor the vehicle. Here is a good article discussing this issue: http://www.salon.com/2015/02/22/why_hitting_a_pedestrian_is_a_nearly_un_punishable_offense/

Finally, perhaps the city can facilitate the discussion of issues between drivers/cyclists?

Thank you for your efforts to make Portsmouth a safer city.

Nick

Nick Allen
nick.allen@innerbridge.com
603-661-8638
Skype: nh.allen

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February 12, 2015

We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please e-mail this form to jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com.

Name: Eric Weinrieb

Email: Eric@altus-eng.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: although i like the folw of this plan. I have reservations as to how it will be received by the vehicular cummunity. It might be found to be confusing to motorists. I also have significant concerns at the transition areas which are not depicted on these renderings.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: I think that this layout will provide the best solution on this corridor. It will allow safe transition from non-bike lane areas. Motorists will find the bicycle traffic easier recognize their movements. Recreational cyclists will be more apt to utilize these lane rather than crossing back and forth. The plans need to be further vetted with clear descriptions as to how the transitions will occur. Stripped makrings on this plan should be considered as landscaped in the final design.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: This concpet is a true winner for legal community. This design is very similar to the design where a cyclist was killed in Durham. It is extremely unsafe and cannot be further explored.

Thank you!

Johnson, Joe

From: Juliet T.H. Walker <jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 8:51 AM
To: DeGray, Jason; Johnson, Joe
Subject: FW: Bike lanes on Middle St.

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

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

From: Jeff Latimer [<mailto:gusbike@me.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 8:44 AM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Cc: Rick Taintor; Bradley Lown
Subject: Bike lanes on Middle St.

Hi Juliet -

With regards to the proposed bike lanes on Middle and in order of preference I'm in favor of

Option A - Protected bike lane

Option B - Bike lane with parking between bike lane and traffic - this has worked well in NYC as I understand it.

I am strongly opposed to Option C which is the option that Durham used leading almost immediately to the death of a person on a bike there. This design really ought to be banned.

Thanks for your tireless efforts on behalf of people riding bicycles in Portsmouth.

Jeff

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Paul Novotny <paul@paulnovo.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 2:45 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Re: Middle Street / Lafayette Road

Thanks for the reply, then my preference is for Concept A, "The two-way protected bike lane".

Also, if possible, a crosswalk at Aldrich would be nice. Full disclosure, I live on Aldrich. :-)

-Paul

On Thu, 2015-02-26 at 14:36 -0500, Juliet T.H. Walker wrote:

> Hi Paul,

>

> Thanks for sending this. The proposed protection would be parked cars as well as paint and/or flexible bollards initially. Longer term, we could consider adding planters or other physical barriers. You can see examples of similar treatments on the project web page, where we've posted some videos of relevant examples -- <http://planportsmouth.com/middle-lafayette-bike-ped.html>.

>

> Juliet T. H. Walker, AICP

> Transportation Planner

> Planning Department

> City of Portsmouth

> 1 Junkins Avenue

> Portsmouth, NH 03801

> (603) 610-7296

> www.planportsmouth.com

> Twitter: @PlanPortsmouth

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Paul Novotny [mailto:paul@paulnovo.us]

> Sent: Thursday, February 26, 2015 2:33 PM

> To: Juliet T.H. Walker

> Subject: Middle Street / Lafayette Road

>

> Hi Juliet, I have attached my comments about the Middle St / Lafayette Road protected bike lanes. I do have one question though, how is the "protection" for Concept A and B going to be done? Is it going to be street painting, or physical barriers like the planters shown in the concept drawings?

>

> -Paul

Conceptual Alternatives Public Meeting

Middle Street/Lafayette Road

February 12, 2015

We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please e-mail this form to jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com.

Name: Paul Novotny

Email: paul@paulnovo.us

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: I like this concept, as well as Concept B. Both provide better separation from traffic and cars.

My preference to A and B comes down to how the protection is done. I would prefer the one that provides better protection from traffic,

ie does one provide solid barriers instead of just painting the street?

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: See Concept B comment.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: This is my least favorite. It doesn't seem to be any safer for bikers than the current situation.

Bikers are still exposed to traffic on one side, and drivers getting out of their cars on the other side (being doored!).

Thank you!

Johnson, Joe

From: Juliet T.H. Walker <jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com>
Sent: Monday, February 23, 2015 9:57 AM
To: DeGray, Jason; Johnson, Joe
Subject: FW: bicycle plan input

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

From: Patricia Bagley [<mailto:patbagley@aol.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 19, 2015 11:56 AM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: bicycle plan input

February 12, 2015

We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please e-mail this form to jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com.

Name: Patricia Bagley

Email: Patbagley@aol.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track Comments: This looks to be the safest. Recommended by Jeff Speck. My vote! I prefer the additional safety of parked cars as a buffer between bikers and autos, trucks, and buses.

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes Comments: My second vote. Safer on one side than the other, but not as safe as Concept A.

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes Comments: I can't support Concept C for safety reasons. Drivers are too hurried and distracted to consider bikers. It's not intentional. Bikers are not on drivers' radar just yet. Imagine a driver talking on a cell phone, needing to make a right turn, and here comes a biker....

COMMENTS: If we are to do anything, let's do it right. Safety is the main issue. Concept A seems to offer the best safety and peace of mind. In general, bikers are both annoying and envied. They are not considered as co-sharers of the roads. We have lived in an automobile-owns-the-road culture (unless you are on an interstate, then the trucks own the road). If Portsmouth takes the high road (no pun intended) with Concept A, then perhaps the culture will change and we will become like other cities where bikers are tolerated and even welcomed.

Thank you, Juliet, for having the Herald ask for our comments. I missed the most recent meeting, regrettably, and appreciate the opportunity for input. Perhaps when our bike lanes are established, we can further educate the public to biking awareness.

Great job!

Thank you!

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: CYNTHIA STIFTER <tvr@psu.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2015 3:51 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: pedestrian/bike plan for Middle/Lafayette

Dear Julie,

I would like to share my thoughts about the 3 bike plans proposed by the city.

Given the 3 choices, I would recommend Concept B where there is a protected bike lane on each side of the street.

I do not recommend Concept A as this concept treats bikes as non-traffic and encourages cars to disregard the rights of bikes to be on the road. Also, I can see how there might be bike-bike accidents.

Concept C would be my second choice. My problem with this concept is not that bikes are not protected from the cars but that on one side the bike rides next to parked cars. This poses a danger to the cyclist. However, I do like this concept as bikes need to be integrated into traffic and this concept does that while giving them room on the road to ride. If there were no parking on the side of the road then I would have chosen this proposal.

Cindy Stifter
294 Pleasant St.

Conceptual Alternatives Public Meeting Middle Street/ Lafayette Road

February 12, 2015

We
welcome
your feedback and input on this project. Please
e-
mail this form to
jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com

.
Name:

Email:

:

Concept

B –

Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: I vote for concept B

Steve Bakula
Pedal Power Cycle
Portsmouth

Conceptual Alternatives Public Meeting

Middle Street/Lafayette Road

February 12, 2015

We **welcome** your feedback and input on this project. Please e-mail this form to jthwalker@cityofportsmouth.com.

Name: William McQuillen

Email: baldunionthug@gmail.com

Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track

Comments: This plan will make the area far more congested and traffic a nightmare. Public safety will be an issue as you now are reducing traffic flow on a main artery and giving no room for safety vehicles to get through as the bike paths and parking have eliminated all the room in this corridor

Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes

Comments: This Plan also will make traffic more problematic by reducing tun lanes and make the Route 1 corridor more congested as people try to get to downtown, making it less desireable

Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Comments: This is clearly the best choice for bicyclists and vehicles

Thank you!

CHARLES A. GRIFFIN
210 HILLSIDE DRIVE
PORTSMOUTH NH 03801
603-431-4605
SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL.

In his February 20th letter to the editor , Mr Gerald Duffy extols the virtues of the “Safe Routes to School Program “ and urges his readers “ to contact city officials and let them know your thoughts.”

I am taking Mr.Duffy up on his suggestion and since he chose a public forum to explain why he supports the proposal, I am using the same forum to explain why I object to it.

While I question the wisdom of the proposal as a whole, my primary objection is to the portion of the plan that proposes to extend the limits of the project along Lafayette Road through the intersection at South Street all the way to Jarvis Drive.

The Safe Routes to School Program is explained on the NHDOT Internet as a “nationwide effort encouraging children in kindergarten through eighth grade ,including those with disabilities, to safely walk or ride bikes to school.”

The City’s Safe Routes to School Action Plan prepared in 2010 states “ It will help further develop safe routes to the five schools in the City of Portsmouth (not including the high school) and the context map shows

the route extending out Middle Street but stopping at the intersection of Lafayette Road and Middle Road, . and going nowhere near the high school.

Such a plan is consistent with the objective of the program as set for the by the NHDOT but Including the high school in this proposal is not .

I question how many high school students are going to ride their bikes to school. It is hardly the “cool” thing to do and I submit the designers of the program reached the same conclusion which is why they did not include high school students when they designed the program.

If you have ever attempted to drive through the intersection of Lafayette Road and South Street and Greenleaf Avenue and Lafayette Road around 7 am when school is in session, you know those intersections are an absolute gridlock because of the traffic heading to the high school. This morning with school not in session there were no gridlocks.

And we are asked to believe that allowing students to ride bicycles through those intersections is going to be safe?

Mr Duffy admits that he would not allow a child of his to ride down Middle Street on a “traditional” bike lane because “the speed of traffic and the lack of a buffer would make it far too risky.”

So why has the City expanded the scope of the Safe Routes to School proposal?

While on the one hand using a Safe Routes to School Grant to defray the cost of the program, the City has used that grant as a springboard to implement the broader Middle Street/Lafayette Road Bicycle and Pedestrian Corridor Project the goal of which is to make travel along a critical section of Route 1 safer and appealing for pedestrians and bicyclists of all ages .

The proponents of this expanded plan propose to address the safety issue by installing a two way cycle track along the easterly side of Lafayette Rod from Jarvis Drive to Congress Street. This track will be 4-5 feet in width and have a minimum 3 foot buffer, meaning that up to 8 feet of existing roadway will no longer be available for use by motor vehicles.

Currently, there are left hand turn lanes from Lafayette Road onto Jarvis Drive, from Lafayette Road onto Greenleaf Avenue and from Lafayette Road onto South Street. If the width of the existing roadway is reduced by 8 feet to accommodate the bicyclists what will happen to these left hand turn lanes? I submit there will not be enough room for them to remain which will only make the situation worse as the

same amount of vehicular traffic will be forced through a much narrower passageway.

The proponents also have produced a plan showing the “Project Limits” or the boundaries of the plan. It shows the southernmost boundary ending at Jarvis Drive, the entrance to the high school.

However, if the purpose of the plan is to accommodate bicyclists of all ages, does anyone seriously believe that an adult bicycling on Lafayette Road is going to stop at Jarvis Drive, turn around and head back towards downtown simply because the plan says that is where the route stops?

Rather will they not continue on Lafayette Road towards and through the traffic lights at the intersection of Lafayette Road and the Route 1 By-pass and onto a four lane highway enroute to Dunkin Donuts, McDonald's, Fresh Foods or any of the myriad of businesses in that area?

How safe will that be for cyclists and motorists alike?

The proponents also fail to understand that the character of Lafayette Road between the intersection with the By-Pass and South Street is far different from that beyond the intersection with South Street and the downtown. The first stretch carries much more traffic much of which

enters and exists at South Street and for that reason is much less safe than the stretch between South Street and the downtown.

Mr. Duffy also tells us that vehicular trips in and out of town might take an extra 30 seconds and in some places it might be a tight fit for emergency vehicles, “but their (city) crews are amazing and we know they can do it.”

Indeed. Try telling someone riding in an ambulance to the hospital with a serious condition that 30 seconds doesn't make a difference. Remember, the ambulance frequently travels along Lafayette Road and down Greenleaf Avenue enroute to the hospital. Try telling the ambulance driver, police officer or firefighter responding to a call who has to travel on a narrower Lafayette Road that 30 seconds doesn't make a difference!

Decisions of this nature require balancing competing interests namely the desire of a minority who like to ride their bicycles wherever they please versus the vast majority who understand that roadways and highways exist to accommodate motor vehicles. One need look no farther than Rye in recent summers to see what can happen when bicyclists start riding in areas not intended to accommodate them.

Bicyclists want the same privileges but not the same responsibilities as motorists. Motorists must have their vehicles inspected to make sure

they are safe to be operated on roadways. Are bicyclists required to do so ?

Motor vehicles must be equipped with headlights for driving at night?
Are bicycles required to have headlights ?

Motorists must stop at red lights and wait until the light changes to green before proceeding. On several occasions I have observed bicyclists stop at a red light and then proceed through it before it changes to green.

In short the so called Safe Routes to School proposal is anything but safe for students cyclists and motorists and should go no farther or at least it's scope be limited to what was originally proposed.

Charles A. Griffin

05 Mar 2015

Juliet Walker
City of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Ave
Portsmouth NH 03801

Middle Street Safe Routes to School Concepts

Dear Juliet,

Please find below a whole series of comments that relate to "doing it right". I do understand and agree that "right" is fuzzy, and subject to finances and opinion and opportunity.

One system-level idea that I think should define what we do: The purpose of the bike/ped program is to get people on bicycles around town, and so we are attempting to find out what barriers exist that prevent people (adults to elementary school kids) from riding bicycles on Middle St, and then remedy those barriers while not inordinately impacting people who drive vehicles on Middle St.

Most likely, many of those barriers, their priority, and their solutions will be fuzzy just like "doing it right" but being able to describe barriers and solutions may help everybody. But, it's makes a clear question for any suggestion or question - "will this help get people on bicycles?"

And as you mentioned, we indeed have 4 options, option D being to do nothing quite yet.

All that said **I strongly believe that Concept A has the most benefits and the fewest technical challenges** to make it work from many perspectives. Below I work through the various issues per Concept.

I'd be very happy to talk with you more, either to answer questions or discuss alternatives.



Peter

A - BARRIERS

Ease of Use: One of the barriers I feel strongly about is the ease of use of the infrastructure. Ease of use will drive acceptance - any interruption or difficult entry/exit will encourage people to use other pathways (including being on the vehicle laneways). This extends to maintenance (plowing, paving, etc.), so any acceptable means we have to encourage ease of use should be implemented. What this does mean is that the details can make a significant difference to the final rendition of each plan.

Safety: A second barrier is safety. One point that we didn't really discuss is how this is being 'marketed' to the public and thus what cross-section of users we are publicly encouraging. Given this is a Safe Routes to School program, and that the plan makes mention of connecting to schools and library, etc., I think we have to assume that we are encouraging rather vulnerable users. You mentioned you'd send your kids onto Middle with Concept-C style or even the current (non) striping, but I feel you (and I, etc.) are a special case. The many discussions I've had with Sustainable Portsmouth and other groups, experiencing places like Seattle where Concept-C was implemented on many roads across the city (and since replaced with buffered lanes), and following the national and international bicycle transport trends leads me to believe that Portsmouth would benefit erring the Middle Street bike/ped improvements towards obvious safety.

Cost: I understand City Hall's desire to avoid construction improvements and 'solve' this with a new striping plan. Note that we have both creation and ongoing maintenance costs. It will be interesting as we get into the details and hopefully any difficult spots are few.

B - SAFETY and EASE OF USE

In general:

Concept C - For an experienced person on a bicycle, riding Middle with 'old-school' bike lane striping would be very close to what it is now - doable, but pay close attention to doors and side streets, etc. There's a very thin air gap between you and parked vehicles on the right and 30+ mph moving traffic on the left. This scenario does very little to protect vulnerable users, besides suggest to people in vehicles that they should stay on their side of a white line. Also, navigation on a street like this is difficult for people on bicycles, as turning onto a sidestreet (especially across traffic) requires significant shoulder checking (potentially perilous between parked and moving vehicles) or finding a spot to pull off and cross like a pedestrian. Again, all of this is doable as an experienced person on bicycle, but the level of danger rises dramatically as experience decreases, and the consequences of a door, wandering vehicle, or mistaken wobble into traffic can mean death or serious injury. It's a very A/B scenario with significant consequences and relatively thin margins of error.

Concept B - There are two different safety scenarios here: 1) a 2-foot air gap to 30+ mph traffic on the west (outbound) side, or 2) a 3-foot air gap plus parked cars on the east (inbound) side. (And the idea of alternating the parking is noted, as is the Sagamore situation of parking only on the non-house side.) Scenario 2 is similar to Concept A so I will address it below. The Scenario 1 outbound 2-foot air gap is certainly a significant improvement from Concept-C. This increases the margins of error for both the people in vehicles and on bicycles. There will be a marked change in navigation as a shoulder check doesn't have to be as quick or as far, and there are no car doors waiting to

suddenly open ahead. Even with the increased margins of error, Concept B outbound bike lanes still suffer from possible significant injury or death consequences if the (easy to cross) air-gap margin is breached. We need to ensure that people in vehicles turning across the bike lanes have enough sight line to see people on bicycles in the bike lanes approaching intersections and also that people on bicycles recognize the green fill paint denoting intersections (and driveways?) so they watch for crossing vehicles.

Concept A - This is the current mainstay suggestion of bike/ped designers worldwide and the type that many cities are turning to. All people on bicycles are separated from moving vehicles by not only by an air gap, but also by physical objects (parked vehicles and bollards in our situation). The only time people on bicycles and in vehicles have to interact is at intersections, which are easily marked in a way that everybody notices. One bonus of Concept A versus Concept B inbound bike lane is that Concept A has the extra buffer of the outbound bike lane between opening doors and their lane, and the outbound lane which is closest to the vehicle has easy visibility into and from the vehicle. We may mean we could narrow the 3-foot buffer slightly if we need the space for other lanes. Similar to Concept B, we need to ensure that people in vehicles turning across the bike lanes have enough sight line to see people on bicycles in the bike lanes approaching intersections and also that people on bicycles recognize the green fill paint denoting intersections (and driveways?) so they watch for crossing vehicles. This is especially important here as there is two-way bike traffic on the inbound side, but also a reduced worry on the outbound side with no bike lanes.

Specifics:

1) Sight lines: Certain sections of Middle St have difficult sight lines due to elevation changes and curves that make crossing the road and especially shoulder checking on a bicycle difficult. This is very true for Concept C, and B to a degree.

2) Sidestreet/intersection crossings: Concept B and C both suffer from safety concerns getting people on bicycles across the outbound intersections of Aldrich, Middle Rd and Greenleaf. All of those intersections are have long crossing distances along Middle St, are certainly high volume entry and exits from Middle St, and due to sightlines people in vehicles tend to encroach on the travel lanes to have a safer/quicker entry. Concept A avoids those situations completely with bicycles only on the 'inbound' side.

3) Entry and Exit (next 3 paragraphs):

Exit and entry from Concept C is easy and understandable, in that the person on a bike will operate the same as a person in a vehicle. When the striping disappears at Miller or Richards, the lanes simply turn into sharrows - easy for people in vehicles and on bicycles to understand, though it does increase the danger level slightly for people on bicycles. At the Jarvis end, any outbound person trying to turn into the school area will have to be in the vehicle travel lane, mixing with the 3-way intersection traffic.

Concept B is similar to C on the outbound lane. On the inbound lane, entry is very easy from a sidestreet on the inbound side. Entry into the inbound lane from a sidestreet on the outbound side is tricky in that we have to encourage people to come all the way to the far curb and not turn into the vehicle lanes. This means good visibility of where the bike lane is (helped by the green fill paint at both sidestreets and driveways and maybe a bike symbol at sidestreets) and not obscuring it behind cars parked too close to the intersection (which will also make sidestreet exit and entry for people in vehicles easier, with better visibility of both bike lane and vehicle lanes). Designing enough visibility at

each intersection, and also each driveway, is going to be tough and could reduce parking spots. Where the striping ends at Miller or Richards, the transition to sharrows is relatively easy and understandable. At Jarvis, the situation will be the same as Concept C.

Concept A entry is easy from any spot on the inbound side. From the sidestreets on the outbound side, we again have to encourage people to come all the way across and not obscure the entry. Green fill paint, bike symbols, etc... What this does mean is that any person on bicycle who is exiting the bike lane and crossing the vehicles lanes into a sidestreet on the outbound side will effectively turn at a sidestreet intersection area to be perpendicular to the vehicle travel lanes before crossing. This greatly increases safety and visibility and predictability for everybody. The current concept at the Millar/Richards end is to transition to air-buffered lanes on both sides at Millar and then to sharrows at Richards. This means that at Millar, we need a way to get people on bicycles from the outbound side to the inbound side. An option would be to add a pedestrian segment to the signal timing, with diagonal striping/fill to indicate the transition. This could operate similarly to the pedestrian "all-play" at Maplewood/Islington/Congress/Middle intersection. It would mean infrastructure changes and additions at the Millar/Middle signal, including bicycle level sensors or push-buttons to activate the pedestrian segment. Please note that if we use push-buttons similar to Maplewood/Islington, there have to be buttons located directly next to the bicycle lanes and not up on the sidewalk out of easy reach. When people on bicycles depart from the library and Middle School area to head out of town, this means at Richards they are being asked to cross the street, and then cross again at Millar. I suspect they will ride the sidewalk to Millar and join the buffered bike lanes. An option may be to extend the air-buffered two-lane bikeway from Millar to Richards, if we have room for three bike lanes and two air buffers. At Richards, all bicycle laneways become sharrows, so nobody will be encouraged to bicycle against traffic on the roadway or sidewalk from Court.

C – LANE WIDTHS, TRAFFIC CALMING and EMERGENCY VEHICLES

See attached spreadsheet. Interestingly, Concept A allows for wider vehicle travel lanes than B and C if given the same overall width, wide enough that the emergency vehicle width request could be honoured without impacting parking, etc.

Please note the suggested different buffer widths for concept B and C. Concept B has people on bicycle approaching parked vehicles only from the rear, and so a 3-foot buffer is more appropriate than 2, whereas in Concept A people on bicycles travelling directly next to the parked vehicles are approaching from the front of the vehicle, allowing better visibility both into and from the vehicle and so a 2-foot buffer could be appropriate.

Concept C - The bike lane striping will make a slight difference to vehicle speeds, but I would guess nothing significant because the visual lane widths and sight lines are effectively similar to the current state. This doesn't significantly slow vehicle speeds that are directly next to people on bicycles.

Concept B - The inbound lane will feel squeezed between parked vehicles and the outbound travel lane. The outbound lane will not as squeezed because of the visual effect of the 2-foot buffer plus bike lane. This could be construed as a bonus in that it traffic calms incoming higher-speed traffic and makes the exit from downtown feel faster.

Concept A - With the vehicle travel lanes completely separate from the bike lanes, there isn't as much worry about traffic calming. And with the potential for wider lane widths as noted by the spreadsheet, vehicle speeds would probably be similar to Concept C, meaning that emergency vehicles both would have more room and traffic speeds would be higher requiring less passing. As noted in Safety above, ensuring good visibility of people in the bicycle lanes approaching intersections will be important.

D – WATER DRAINAGE

Concept C won't suffer from any pathway grates or serious water drainage issues since the grates and main puddles will be under the parked cars.

Concept B means both bike lanes will be at the very edge of the roadway, exposing the people on bicycles to more grates and deeper puddles on both sides of the road. This will be similar to Sagamore Ave and other roads where there isn't any on-street parking, and even though Public Works tries very hard to make the grates and bumps minimal impact, just by the nature of water flow there has to be some elevation change.

For Concept A, people on bicycles will only be affected by grates and puddles on the inbound side, but they have the (safe) outbound bicycle lane to veer into to pass any obstacles without veering into the air-gap buffer directly next to traffic. The sidewalks on the outbound side might see more splash activity from passing vehicles.

E – REGULAR MAINTENANCE

Concept C will need very little maintenance beyond the usual roadway work and simple re-striping.

Concept B will need more roadway work to maintain the two bike lanes as smoother pathways, and re-striping means more green fill and white marking than Concept C or A. The inbound bike lane pavement and buffer striping will stay in good shape for longer, but the outbound bicycle lane may not fare as well from wandering vehicle tires.

Concept A will need more roadway work only on one side of the road, and with the two-way bike lanes seeing only bicycle traffic the pavement and buffer striping should remain in much better shape for longer.

F – WINTER MAINTENANCE

We do live in New Hampshire, and so will be dealing with winter conditions for some of the year. As noted during the bike/ped process last winter and as experienced again this winter, safe pedestrian access to town is difficult where sidewalk conditions or design don't allow easy clearing (or when it just isn't done, as we can see on Badger Island and beyond). As much as bicycles aren't typically used in winter, the different concepts do facilitate different plowing possibilities and thus allow and encourage _safe_ bicycle use during the winter.

Concept C - Same plowing scenario as currently, so the bike lanes stay open all year, even if parked cars hinder plowing.

Concept B - Same plowing scenario as normal on the outbound side, but the inbound side is too narrow between the curb and parked vehicles for a sidewalk plow and could

likely get filled up with snow, delaying use until after the piled up snow melts. On the outbound side, more than likely the bike lane would get overflow snow from the road and sidewalk and usage would be delayed until the piled snow melts.

Concept A - The vehicle travel lanes would be cleared as normal between the parked cars and curb, so the vehicle lanes would operate much like Court, State or any other downtown street with sidewalks directly next to the roadway. On the inbound side, the double bike lane is wide enough to allow a sidewalk plow to easily operate and keep the bike lanes clear of snow, facilitating people exiting their cars (they don't have to walk on the roadway as much when they can use the bike lanes) and regular use by people on bicycles. This would be beneficial in times of heavier snow when parking downtown is negatively impacted.

5-Mar-15

Middle Street Bike/Ped lane widths

Emerg:	25.5 total request		
	vehicle	emerg	vehicle
	8	9.5	8

All numbers in feet

Concept C	48 total width			22 vehicle travel lanes only		
Jarvis - Millar				34 bike and vehicle travel lanes		
	Parking	Bike	Travel	Travel	Bike	Parking
	7	6	11	11	6	7
Concept C	34 total width			22 vehicle travel lanes only		
Miller - Richards				34 bike and vehicle travel lanes		
	Bike	Travel	Travel	Bike		
	6	11	11	6		

Concept B	42 total width			31 parking to buffer, inclusive			
Jarvis - Millar				35 parking to curb, inclusive			
	Bike	Buffer	Parking	Travel	Travel	Buffer	Bike
	4	3	7	11	11	2	4
Concept B	34 total width			26 buffer to buffer, inclusive			
Millar - Richards							
	Bike	Buffer	Travel	Travel	Buffer	Bike	
	4	2	11	11	2	4	

Concept A	39 total width			31 buffer to curb, inclusive			
Jarvis - Millar							
	Bike	Bike	Buffer	Parking	Travel	Travel	
	4	4	2	7	11	11	
Concept A	38 total width			26 buffer to buffer, inclusive			
Millar - Richards							
	Bike	Bike	Buffer	Travel	Travel	Buffer	Bike
	4	4	2	11	11	2	4