

Summary of Public Comments March 12, 2020 Public Meeting

Resident at 188 Union St

Bike lane user. Initially opposed to the bike lanes, now opposed to Middle St being a "parking lot", suggests removing more parking, not the bike lanes.

Resident at 94 Odiorne Point Rd

Concern about sight lines accessing Middle St from Cass St, parking spaces are too far out in the road. Suggests separation of bicyclists from motor vehicles all together. Consider eliminating bike lanes if overall safety can't be improved.

Resident at 25 Lafayette Rd

Has not observed any high schoolers using bike lanes and many adults use sidewalk for biking. Personal experience is that riding next to the curb is problematic because of debris, lack of street sweeping.

Resident and Business Owner at 504-506 Middle St

Located in HDC, concern about aesthetics of bollards. Suggested adding traffic light on Middle Street at Cass Street. Cars are speeding, need to be slowed down. Problem at night with cars parked in the street. Has impacted her business because of impact on on-street parking.

Anne Rugg – SABR (Seacoast Area Bike Riders)

Protected bike lanes are necessary, standard facility nationally. SABR and Commute SMART commend City for adopting first protected bike lane in NH. Better for vulnerable road users.

Resident at 774 Middle St

Not supportive of the bike lanes, doesn't think they are safe for drivers leaving her driveway (particularly young drivers). Referenced City of Portsmouth driveway rules and claims City does not comply with its own policy or AASHTO. Not enough data to prove that this has been successful, need more study. Pave road, add crosswalks, add speed tables.

Resident on Park St across from Cass St

Doesn't like cars parked in the street away from the curb and bollards are problematic. Suggest using Lincoln Ave instead and sign a bike route.

Resident of Lincoln Ave

Supports bicycle infrastructure and the cycle track concept, but concerned about the number of driveways intersecting the cycle track and overall safety for bicyclists. Would like to see some improvements.

Resident of Aldrich Rd

Appreciate intentions, may provide a false sense of security given it is so short. Concern about big trucks and narrowness of the road. Visibility from Aldrich Rd as cars are turning. Move the parking spaces to curb and get rid of bollards.

Resident at 20 Doris Ave

Not enough people using the lanes. Intersection safety is a concern. People have shifted from walking on the sidewalks to walking in the bike lanes. Who asked for this?

Resident at 280 Thaxter Rd

Uses the bike lanes with his kids. Design slows down traffic even if bollards unsightly. Please expand bike lane network.

Aldrich Rd – Patricia Martine

Recording of Meeting Available on City's YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/yBCNHFo8zz0>

Has not observed any increase in bike lanes and pedestrians as a result. Concerned about intersection and sight lines at Aldrich Rd. Misses the "boulevard" that Middle St used to be.

Resident at 564 Middle St

Bike lanes don't appear to be used enough. Aesthetics of bollards not appropriate. Doesn't like having parking in the road. On-street parking is needed, move bike lanes outside of parking. Use speed limit to control speeds.

Bike Rider

Likes the protected bike lanes. Consider moving the parking away from the intersections to improve sight lines.

Portsmouth Resident

Feels much safer on Middle Street with the bike lanes than she does in other places in the City. Bike lane needs to be cleaned and swept more often.

Seacoast Community Church member

Not supportive of the bike lane design, makes road too narrow. Safety concerns at Greenleaf Ave intersection needs to be addressed.

Resident at 673 Middle St

Middle Street residents are bearing cost of loss of parking and challenges created for drivers exiting driveways. No observed increase in bicyclists. Doesn't seem safe for bicyclists.

Resident near Middle St / Cass St

Submitted written comments critical of bike lanes

Resident

Lots of planning went into this. Uses the bike lanes often for commuting. Minor adjustments can be made, but overall design is good. Remove some more parking if helpful and complete the bike lane network. Need more time to increase usage.

Resident at Kensington Rd

Appreciates the bike lanes and uses them, even if minor improvements are needed.

Resident

Feels much more comfortable as a bicyclists with the bike lanes. Bicyclists at High School have been increasing steadily over time.

Resident at 622 Middle St

Read email submitted by Jim Hewitt regarding sight lines, intersections, and driveways. Doesn't like parking in the street.

Resident at 210 Hillside Dr

Volume of cyclists doesn't justify what has been done. Why not just change entire corridor to shared lane markings?

Resident at 25 Lafayette Rd

Supports crosswalks and lights, but doesn't feel safe turning out of the driveway.

Recording of Meeting Available on City's YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/yBCNHFo8zz0>

Resident on Middle St near Lincoln

This type of bicycle lane does not belong on a major artery. Not enough bicyclists are using this to justify. Doesn't like the look of the bollards. Enforce the speed limit.

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Hannah Giovannucci <hgiovannucci@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 12:13 AM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Comments on Middle Street/Lafayette Road Bicycle Lane Project

Hello Ms. Walker,

I live near the intersection of Middle Street and Cass Street and have experienced both versions of Middle Street: pre-bike lanes and post-bike lanes. I am a cyclist, driver, and pedestrian who utilizes Middle Street and Lafayette Road. I am primarily a motorist on the corridor, however, in better weather I often walk, run, or bike to and from downtown or towards Lafayette Plaza Shopping Center. I am also a professional engineer with a focus in transportation engineering.

As a reminder, this corridor is a principal arterial road which is intended to serve high traffic volumes, carry a high proportion of urban travel, and serve demand for intra-area travel, among other characteristics. A 30 mph to 35 mph speed limit, based on the 85th percentile speed, is not unreasonable, especially to move traffic efficiently on a principal arterial.

Like most New England roadways, the winding corridor has limited and variable widths. This obviously creates challenges for fitting all desired design elements. Although the design meets most minimum bike lane standards, minimums are rarely enough for the public to feel comfortable. Due to the tight widths and shifting lanes, this forced Complete Streets design project is confusing and dangerous for all modes of transportation.

As a cyclist, driver, and pedestrian on Middle Street, I do not feel safe using the current design as either a cyclist, pedestrian, driver, nor resident who parks my vehicle on the street. I believe the currently narrow design creates confusion, false sense of security, congestion, and increased hazards for cyclists and other roadway users.

I would prefer Middle Street and Lafayette Road returned back to the wide and charming shared and yet still bike-friendly roadway it once was, perhaps with some modifications. As a cyclist, I felt more comfortable and safer on the shared roadway prior to the revised design. For slower or more cautious cyclists, such as students seeking safe routes to school, there are numerous residential side streets with little traffic that offer better cut throughs compared to Middle Street.

I understand the primary goal of this project was to create bike lanes for "Safe Routes to School" and other bicycle users. This project has not increased the number of cyclists using the roadway and there is very minimal bike lane utilization. Cyclists compose approximately 2% of the traffic on this corridor.

New Hampshire is an aging population with limited housing for less established, often younger demographic. Perhaps due to the unpredictable and chilly/humid weather, the population does not seem receptive to the inconvenience of leaving the protection of their vehicles.

I urge the Planning Department to reconsider the future of transportation and the imposed strategies in Portsmouth. Pushing an agenda to trade in our vehicles for biking has shown an underwhelming response in our community. There are, however, alternatives on the horizon that will reduce vehicles on the road, parking demand, and improve sustainability, which is the ultimate goal of "Complete Streets" and "Sustainable Development" policies. I will mention these alternatives later.

I present the following thought topics and suggestion in bullet-form for simplicity:

General Issues with the Middle Street Bike Bicycle Lane Project (2018 to present):

1. Narrow, unprotected, and unsafe design for all transportation modes (including parked vehicles);
2. Distracting design – due to lane shifts, varied parking locations, bollards, sight visibility due to parking between bike lanes and travel lanes, catch basins or other hazards in bike lanes, etc.;
3. Bike lane design which creates a false sense of security compared to the previous roadway – (A) greater points of conflict, (B) reduced sight distance, and (C) more hazards in the bike lane
4. Vehicular congestion and little to no passing options within the bike lane;
5. Long pedestrian crossings and few areas for refuge; and
6. Poor aesthetic – Striping all over the road (which requires restriping) and bollards (although best and most functional option I have seen) are still an eye sore.

Specific Issues for Elements of Middle Street Bicycle Lane Project (2018 to present):

For Bike Lanes

1. Hazards (fixed) such as catch basins and dips in pavement along bike lane
2. Hazards (unfixed) such as swinging car doors, stormwater runoff along the curb, moving vehicles at intersections, leaves/debris, etc.
3. Non-smooth riding surface (cross sectionally and in path of travel)
4. Separated bike lanes (with parking in between) doubles the points of conflict at intersections since drivers must verify there is no traffic in twice as many lanes
5. Vehicles must block bike lanes at intersections in order to see beyond parked cars to enter traffic

For Vehicular Travel Lanes

1. Narrow, shifting lanes causing vehicles to cross parking lanes, center lines, and bike lane buffers
2. Congestion and hazards due to buses block the travel lanes, vehicles taking turns, etc.
3. Frustration and aggression due to “traffic calming” practices... People go the speed they are comfortable with to get places and these speeds. 30 mph – 35 mph is not an unreasonable travel speed for a major arterial road.
 - Note that the 85th percentile speed (which is what speed limits are supposed to be based on) does not significantly change:
 - Pre Bike Lanes (May 2014 – June 2018): 29 mph to 35 mph
 - Post Bike Lanes (Oct 2018 – May 2019): 28 mph to 34 mph.
4. Limited sight distance since parking is pushed closer to the center of the roadway which reduces from stop lines/crosswalks
 - i.e. At the Middle Street/Cass Street intersection, to the south of the intersection, the intersection used to have a sight distance of ~200', and with the redesign is now ~100'.

For Parking

1. ADA parking has been sacrificed in lieu of bike lanes which discounts the importance of individuals protected under the United States Americans with Disabilities Act
2. Drivers understandably park in the bike lane buffer to protect their vehicle from vehicular traffic. Note that two vehicles near where I park have lost their mirror or have been sideswiped. Police no longer ticket for this near Cass Street, but if enforced, I would expect more property damage and potentially bodily injury for individuals exiting vehicles because:
 - Even while parking within the bike buffer and standing next to the vehicles, exiting drivers have 0' to 3' feet of refuge while traffic is passing by.
 - Vehicles rarely stop for pedestrians crossing the road to get from vehicles to residences/businesses.
3. Parking unprotected from lanes shifts or vehicles making wide turns at intersections
4. Parking on one side of the street creates extra pedestrian crossings across a high traffic street
5. Occasionally competitive parking since there is only parking on one side of the street

For Pedestrians

1. Long pedestrian crossings
2. Limited space between parking and vehicular travel lanes for refuge
3. Vehicles stop less for pedestrians crossing, which I suspect is due to driver frustration due to the congestion created by this project

The Data

1. No significant changes in bicycle counts and in fact it appears there were more cyclists before the bike lanes (from Portsmouth Planning data)
 - Pre Bike Lanes (May 2017 to August 2018): 2.8 bikes/hour to 10.2 bikes/hour (average 6.0 bikes/hour)
 - Post Bike Lanes (October 2018 to October 2019): 0.5 bikes/hour to 6.7 bikes/hour (average 3.1 bikes/hour)
2. Not a significant decrease in traffic collisions along corridor (from Portsmouth Planning data):
 - Pre Bike Lanes (October 2017 to October 2018): 26 collisions
 - Post Bike Lanes (October 2018 to October 2019): 25 collisions
3. Not a significant decrease in vehicular speeds analyzed in both directions as various locations (from Portsmouth Planning data):
 - Pre Bike Lanes (May 2014 to June 2018): 29 mph to 35 mph
 - Post Bike Lanes (Oct 2018 to Present): 28 mph to 34 mph

Existing Transportation Users

- Redesign for bike lanes serves approximately 2% of total roadway users (per data provided by Planning). There is not high demand for cycling as a transportation mode and little to no increase in cyclists even with installed bike lanes.
- During warm weather, there is a surge of moped users which, similar to bicycles, reduces gasoline usage and parking space requirements
- The number one mode of transportation is vehicles. Demand for vehicular travel is large despite that owners spend thousands and go into debt rather than walk, cycle, or use public transit. Some potential reasons:
 - Time – no waiting for a ride and faster pace of travel in a fast-pace, busy lifestyle
 - Convenience – storage for shopping, keep personal items handy on the go, carry passenger, transport cargo, etc.
 - Protection – safer compared to body being exposed as a motorcyclist, cyclist, pedestrian, etc.
 - Freedom of choice – ability to get to distant locations and not be limited to local destinations
 - Necessity – long commutes to work, required for work, transporting passengers, etc.
 - Comfort – private transportation in a temperature-controlled climate, no bodily exposure to elements or extreme weather, no sweating or need to shower upon arrival, etc.
 - Predictability – available during rain, sleet, snow, humidity, heat/cold, etc.

Considerations for the Future of Transportation

- People perceive bikes as a leap backwards in technology, compared to the comfort of vehicles. People change for improvements on the existing system, otherwise there is no warrant for change, despite a sustainability plea.
- We have already experienced the Uber/Lyft ride share movement. On the horizon is not just self-driving vehicles, but also car sharing, which will reduce the number of vehicles on the road. [BMW estimates](#) that within a decade, car-sharing vehicle will replace at least three privately owned ones. If part of the concern is reduced vehicle traffic, perhaps shared vehicles are a more practical solution.
- Consider reprioritizing and analyzing how we should allocate time, resources, and money on meeting the public's needs, especially with respect to the future of transportation.

Alternate Options

A. Low Impact: Revert back to original design (with modifications) with parking on either side and wide shared vehicle and bike lanes. Implement some safety measures like textured/colored pavement/concrete around parking (like curb bump out, but flush) to channelize traffic, restriping to provide more formal parking, travel lanes, and shoulders, buffers, etc.

Benefits

- Keeps the design simple and open
- Preserves the aesthetic and rural feel of our quaint Portsmouth community
- Provides safe options for both types of cyclists: experienced and faster cyclists share the road and slower cyclists concerned cyclists use residential road cut throughs
- Parking on both sides of street and reduce pedestrian crossings

- Allows vehicles to pass buses and vehicles queued at intersections
- Better allows emergency vehicles to pass
- Low cost

Cons

- No separated bike lane
- Non-uniform roadway width

B. Medium Impact: Provide bike lanes adjacent to vehicular travel and parking along one side of the street. Install curb bump outs to protect parking and provide shorter pedestrian crossings at intersections. Where there is limited width, parking may be removed or bikes lanes may temporarily transition to shared.

Benefits

- Keeps the design simple and open
- Preserves the aesthetic and rural feel of our quaint Portsmouth community (no bollards) or shifting lanes
- Provides safe options for both types of cyclists: experienced and faster cyclists share the road and slower cyclists concerned cyclists use residential road cut throughs
- Curb bump outs provide shorter pedestrian crossings at intersections
- Curb bumps out provide additional green space
- Allows vehicles to pass buses and vehicles queued at intersections
- Better allows emergency vehicles to pass

Cons

- No separated bike lane
- Non-uniform roadway width
- Parking on one side of street increases pedestrian crossings
- Costly and timely design/construction for retrofit of stormwater drainage system due to bump outs
- Bump outs complicate snow removal

C. High Impact: Full redesign and expand roadway by maintaining a similar design with bike lane/buffer, parking, travel lanes, and buffer/bike lane, except: (A) create a uniform roadway width throughout the corridor, (B) raised buffer between bike lanes and parking, and (C) provide curb bump outs at intersections to protect parking/cyclists and offer shorter pedestrian crossings.

Pros

- Create uniform and greater widths for all modes of transportation
- Offers improved safety for all modes of transportation
- Curb bump outs provide shorter pedestrian crossings at intersections

Cons

- Redesign for bike lanes serves approximately 2% of total roadway users (based on data provided by Planning Department)
- Costly and timely design/construction for (A) redesign of stormwater drainage system, (B) relocation of utility poles, and (C) re-grading of roadway
- Potential for easements or takings to accommodate design where right-of-way widths are limited... otherwise may have similar problems with lane shifts, creating confusion
- Requires removing trees and green space and net increase of paved area
- Bump outs complicate snow removal

Conclusion

- The current design creates confusion, false sense of security, congestion, and increased hazards for cyclists and other roadway users.
- The data suggests that the community may not necessarily use or need designated bike lanes by evidence of the limited demand after a year of bike lanes. A shared roadway is still a safe alternative, with other routes available through residential neighborhoods.
- Consider prioritizing and analyzing how we should allocate time, resources, and money for meeting the publics' needs.

- Consider how the future of the transportation system (automated or shared vehicles) may improve sustainability and future congestion, rather than push social engineering policies to give up vehicles in favor of bicycles which is not practical for our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Hannah Giovannucci, PE

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Matthew Glenn <matthglenn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 19, 2020 3:03 PM
To: Planning Info
Subject: Middle St redesign comments

Dear Planning department,

I've pasted below the letter I sent to city council in support of the current Middle St bike lane design. I'd like to just add that I was very impressed with Juliet Walker's presentation last week, and all of the background, public input, and smart design that went into the project. It's unfortunate that many of the comments were not around "tweaks" or safety improvements, just opposition.

Thank you for all your efforts. I believe that many who were not in the room are in support, and I will try to get them sending comments and out on bikes as the weather improves.

Matt Glenn

Dear Council members,

I want to first of all thank you for your many great efforts to do what is best for our city during this time of pandemic.

I'm writing to you today about a much less urgent and global issue, but one that I feel also impacts the safety of our residents-- the Middle Street redesign. I was really discouraged by many of the comments made by my neighbors at last week's public input meeting. Clearly a number of people are upset with how the buffered bike lanes look and how they have changed their perception of safety as drivers. Some commented that they wouldn't themselves bike in the lanes, claiming it is some way unsafe to ride "near the gutter" or be in a place cars might not be looking for them. I'd like to say just the opposite-- Middle Street was very unsafe for bike riders previously, and riding in the buffered lanes today (as I do on about half of my daily commutes) I feel perfectly safe and visible at all intersections. I've pulled my children down Middle Street on the way to Prescott Park in a bike trailer, and look forward to them riding the lane very soon on their own.

Safety needs to be our top priority, and many in the room last week said they are concerned about the safety of the design. However, it is impossible to deny that a bike rider is much safer when physically separated from cars moving at 35 or 40 mph. I'm sure those who came to comment are cautious and careful drivers; however, there are around 11,000 more daily drivers on Middle Street and we know that far too many are distracted by their smartphones and not paying attention to the road. It would be far better for them to hit a bollard (or perhaps a car mirror, although the statistics show this type of accident has not increased) than a bicycle rider. A few people suggested that we should simply shift the parking back to the curb and paint a "normal" bike lane between the parked cars and the travel lane. They mentioned feeling unsafe opening the driver side door in those parking spots-- having to carefully check mirrors for moving cars before opening the door. That is what they need to do when parking on many other normal-width city streets, and exactly the habit that would save hundreds of cyclists from injury or death each year when "doored" by careless drivers exiting their cars. When this Safe Routes to School project was first considered in November 2014 the [death of bicyclist John Kavanaugh](#) in Durham three months prior was fresh in many of our minds. A driver had parked in a spot on Durham's Main Street with a newly painted bike lane on his left, and he opened his door into the lane without looking, throwing Kavanaugh into the road and killing him.

We do not have an unsafe lane like that-- we have an excellent, buffered lane-- and if we can extend it into a larger network we will really see ridership increase. Across the country bicycle ridership is growing, and unfortunately bicycle and pedestrian deaths are also increasing. Please don't believe the perception by some drivers that it is unsafe-- that feeling of a narrower roadway with parked cars close to the travel lane is meant to slow cars down, which benefits pedestrians, bikes, and all users. So far it has improved safety and lowered car speeds slightly, and we need to give it more time.

Thank you all for your time in these challenging days.
Matthew Glenn

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Andy G <abg521@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2020 6:08 PM
To: Planning Info
Subject: Middle St bike lane
Attachments: Middle St.jpg

I frequently commute by bike and car along Middle St., and less frequently on Lafayette., and wanted to submit comments about the street infrastructure there. I am on the Board of Directors of the Seacoast Area Bicycle Riders (SABR), and submit these comments from my personal experience. I am a Dover resident, but am employed in Portsmouth.

- The City of Portsmouth should proceed with the recommendations of the Portsmouth Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan adopted in 2014. The Middle/Lafayette project is just one small piece of the network, and each piece is greatly improved by continually adding to the entire network.
- The Traffic and Safety presentation giving concrete numbers to the safety is objective evidence that the bike lane and bollards make the street safer. I would not want to see any fewer installed this spring, as that chips away at the important safety features of this configuration.
- Parking issues need to be enforced. Car owners along Middle St have been parking well into the buffer zone, if not over the lines into the bike lane. This forces me to ride in the street, because I will not ride between a curb and a car's door zone for my safety. It's an ongoing issue that doesn't seem to be addressed. See the attached image comprising of 5 different days where cars were improperly parked. I would recommend placing low bike lane delineators in these problem areas - they should be placed in the car parking edge of the buffer to prevent overlapping into the buffer, while allowing passenger-side doors to be opened.
- I mostly enter/leave Middle St from Cass St. Coming from Cass, I stop at the white line before proceeding further (both while driving and cycling). The main impediment to seeing down the road to turn safely is the white fence to the left. However, turning from Middle to Cass presents issues from the cars parked on Middle closest to the intersection as they block views of the bike lane at a critical point. The "protected" bike lane is suddenly unprotected at the intersection, and several times I've had drivers making turns directly at me because they don't see a bike lane user until they appear past the parked cars. I mostly am on these streets around 9am and 5pm for commutes, but have yet to see all parking spots filled. I would recommend removing the parking spots closest to Cass on each side (and assess other streets with parking too close to the corners).
- The road surface needs improvement. Parts of the bike lane are significantly blocked by unsafe sewer grates. Entering the bike lane headed away from downtown, the lane initially curves off-camber and directly into a sewer grate which is particularly problematic.
- More winter maintenance is needed. Snow gets plowed from the road to the curb, and off the sidewalk to the curb. The bike lane is an active lane which should not be used to store snow when the rest of the street is maintained. This is especially problematic when it's untouched and turns into ice that remains for weeks after other snow has melted. Understandably, it may not be the top

priority during a snow event, but after plows have finished clearing streets and sidewalks, this should be addressed instead of left as permanent ice.

- Residents and trash collection staff need reminders about blocking the lane. On trash collection days, the large containers are often placed in the bike lane before collection and additionally left strewn there after emptied, often knocked over. This is an active lanes which should not be impeded.

Thank you,

Andy Goodell

SETH D. LEVINE
569 MIDDLE STREET
PORTSMOUTH, NH 03801-5012
603-988-4317

March 10, 2020

City Council
City of Portsmouth
Municipal Plaza
One Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

RE: Middle Street Bicycle Lanes
Information Meeting March 12, 2020

Honorable Members of the Portsmouth City Council:

I reside at 569 Middle Street and offer the following comments regarding the bike lanes installed on Middle Street for consideration by the Council at the meeting scheduled for March 12, 2000.

While I ride a bicycle myself and believe that our City should take steps to become more bicycle and pedestrian friendly, I do not believe that the Middle Street project is appropriate and, consequently, suggest that it should be scrapped or significantly modified.

As the basis for scrapping or modifying the project, it appears that the use by bicyclists is negligible, and that the project does not enhance the safety of operators of motor vehicles or bicycles.

It is impossible to reach a data-based conclusion of the result of the project. However, because of poor visibility resulting from parked cars, I often see motorists inching onto Middle Street from cross streets and almost causing accidents. Because cars parked on Middle Street appear to be stopped in transit, I observe other cars futilely standing behind the parked cars, waiting for the line of cars to proceed, and then cutting back into traffic. And I have watched a bicyclist crash into the curb while attempting to avoid the passenger door of a parked car opened into the bicyclist's path. There are other problems, such as bollards, costs, parking, and more. Personally, I very rarely ride my bike on Middle Street, choosing instead to use Lincoln Street. I have *never* seen the lanes used by school children, few of which even walk to school on Middle Street, and even then never for more than a very short distance.

But the main issue is that this project is only a solution looking for a problem. While I highly support the creative efforts of our Planning Department, which did an absolutely tremendous job of grappling with the tough and important issue of improving pedestrian and bicycle access, it does not appear that the project is effective at promoting either. We are simply paying for something that does not provide the intended result and, instead, causes harm to our citizens.

Honorable Members of the Portsmouth City Council
March 10, 2020
Page Two

Kindly enter this letter into the record of the information meeting scheduled for March 12, 220.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



SETH D. LEVINE

SDL:mjl

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Patrick Lyons <portsmouthpat@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 8:35 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Bike Lane

Thank you for considering changes to the bike path. We find it very dangerous and I still won't have my kids ride their bikes on it. Drivers are too distracted these days. I want my kids on the sidewalk. Maybe if it was just wider and only on one side then it could work. I am a cyclist and ride on the road so my input if from a cycling parent :-).

Thank you,
—Patrick Lyons

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: janet.polasky@gmail.com
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2020 4:44 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: biking Middle Street

Dear Juliet Walker,

I truly appreciate the efforts of the Planning Department of the City of Portsmouth to make our city more bike friendly. I appreciate the willingness of Portsmouth to be a leader in planning buffered bike lanes on Middle Street and Lafayette Avenue. I'm sorry I was unable to attend the meeting on Thursday evening. I did get home in time to watch the last half hour on Channel 22. I hope that you will continue to make the improvements specified in the bike plan. Thank you for including resident participation in those planning sessions.

I live at 62 Mendum Avenue and three seasons a year, bike into the center of Portsmouth several times a week. I also bike to the indoor swimming pool and to the outdoor pool on Peirce Island daily when they are open. I have tried biking into town along Middle Street. Usually, it's fine. I have lights on the front and back of my bike and wear a safety vest or jacket to make sure I am visible to motorists. I have been sworn at, shouted at, and given the finger for riding the piece from Miller to town. I have had passengers yell at me and tell me get on the sidewalk where I belong. I am an experienced and very considerate bike rider. That never happens to me when I bike in other cities, from Minneapolis to Ann Arbor to The Hague to Hamburg. Very few of my neighbors dare to ride bikes in Portsmouth, and instead drive the mile into town. They think I'm foolhardy.

I have decided, for my own safety, to ride on Lincoln Avenue. Cars are slower and there are fewer parked cars. I stop at all of the stop signs. Originally, I thought that Lincoln was to become a bike boulevard with appropriate sign posting. That solution does work quite well in other cities on similar streets.

Would it be possible to keep the bike lane as it is now from the high school to Lincoln and then to designate Lincoln a bike boulevard stretching to the Middle School, the Public Library, City Hall, and downtown?

Thanks very much,
Janet Polasky
62 Mendum Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801
603 431-6816

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Jane Reynolds <jprattreynolds@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 10:50 AM
To: Planning Info
Cc: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Bike Lane Middle Street

I choose not to visit the meeting in person last night due to the coronavirus threat but I was able to watch most of the meeting on Channel 22. I was pleased to have that option. Thank you for have that availability.

It appears that most of the complaints are about the parked cars, whether it be attempting to open car doors into the traffic and also that they disrupt the sight lines. I believe this area could be tweaked a bit, maybe reduce more (or all) parking spaces and/or change the traffic patterns so people coming out of Cass, Union and other side streets might be limited to only turning right. Has another thought of making those streets one way? There is plenty of congestion currently there that causes each direction to not to have room to pass. Major cities alternate directions on each street. It may be time to do that in the traffic moving between Islington and Middle.

I also agree that the traffic is moving too fast! The speed limit should definitely be reduced and monitored as soon as possible. The time saved at 30 mph is not saving time, it is causing anxiety and accidents.

I know that this route was chosen partly due to the location of the high school. I remember hearing at another meeting about the high numbers of bikes at the middle school daily. We need to give time to this route to see if the aging middle schoolers will continue their habit of riding their bikes to school.

Lastly, I have seen other communities balk at this type of major change. Brattle Street in Harvard Square is a perfect example. Change is hard and it takes time. We do need to make some minor changes but we should not reverse this grant. I have no idea what this cost but returning the money would be devastating to many, especially the biking community. We do not want to go backwards, we want to keep looking ahead to a new ways of transportation. Maybe a community event that would celebrate bike riding and use the bike lane as the route and highlight. I recommend interested people watch the movie Motherload and see how other people and communities are embracing more bike riding in their communities.

A huge thank you to Juliet Walker for all the time and efforts she has put into this project. It is a tough community out there and she has handled it well.

Sincerely,

Jane Pratt Reynolds

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Tom Varley <Tom.Varley@ophotels.com>
Sent: Monday, February 24, 2020 2:54 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Middle Street Bike Lanes

Hi Juliet,

My name is Tom Varley, and I live at 209 Lafayette Road (corner of South and Lafayette). I attended several of the meetings before and after the bike lanes. A couple bollards are placed in front of my home each year.

I cannot make the public meeting on March 12 as I will be out of town, but as a resident who has attended several meetings and is a user of the lanes and lives on the lane.

1. Regardless of whatever surveys' are done, the bike lanes are being used more often, even in winter
2. The smaller bollards were better last year than the larger first ones. My biggest concern was the upkeep and look of the bollards after being hit by several cars. The small ones seem to have held up.
3. The street markings need to be repainted annually, otherwise drivers ignore the tighter areas, maybe speed limit should be 25 not 30

I think the bike lanes are great and we should continue to support the bike, particularly as E-Bikes become more popular.

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Tom Waterman <tom.waterman@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 13, 2020 12:20 PM
To: Planning Info
Subject: Middle Street Bike Lane

I watched the Youtube video of the meeting last night.

First, I want to commend Juliet for being as patient as she was - I don't know if I could have been that gracious with the comments that were made.

I ride my bike to Planet Fitness when the temp is above 45 - I did this before the bike lane - the new bike lane makes this nicer. If the bike lane goes away, I will still be riding to PF.

For the bollards - my only suggestion would be to put them near intersections of side streets only - that would limit cars from cutting the corner when they turn as well as using the bike lane to pass a left hand turning car on the right. Future bump outs could replace them as the road is redone.

If the city decides to get rid of the bike lane - then the discussion of "giving the money" came up - I don't know if this is possible, but rolling the money to another bike project - maybe a Harvard Street Connector to the Rail Trail for students going to the Robert J Lister Academy- Would satisfy the Fed Government.

Lastly, I'm afraid that the lack of acceptance of the bike path is a generational one - it might take a while for a new crop of residents to embrace how it can improve the city.

Keep up the good work.

Tom Waterman
43 Cornwall St, Portsmouth, NH 03801

Juliet T.H. Walker

From: Gary Woods <gwoods24@comcast.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2020 5:11 PM
To: Juliet T.H. Walker
Subject: Bike Lanes

Director Walker- I'd like to express my appreciation for your work to establish the Portsmouth Middle Street bike lanes and other bike accessibility and safety initiatives throughout the city. I encourage you to continue this effort.

I am a Kittery resident but often utilize the Portsmouth bike lanes. I work at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and as you know the Shipyard's workload is increasing and with that comes traffic and parking issues. Since the Navy Yard is on an island more access roads or parking onyard is not a solution. Kittery recently completed an initial Joint Land Use Study funded by the Dept of Defense to engage professional planners to work with area towns and the Shipyard to develop traffic and parking solutions. A key finding of the study is to improve infrastructure to facilitate alternate transportation, specifically biking. The Portsmouth bike lanes are a model of what is needed in Kittery and elsewhere. Many are uncomfortable with these changes but they are needed to support the growing economy, workforce, climate change, safety and overall health. These benefits far outweigh a return to wider and faster vehicle lanes.

Thank-you again for your work.

Gary Woods