

**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
BIKE/PED NETWORK BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE**



THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2026, 6:00 pm

City Hall Conference Room A

1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

For the Zoom recording: <https://youtu.be/-7rRNeR70tk>

MINUTES

1. **CALL TO ORDER** at 6 pm by Vice Chair Matt Glenn.
2. **ATTENDANCE:** Vice Chair Matt Glenn, Tyler Garzo, Patrick Daley, Stephen Longstaffe, Robin Lurie-Meyerkopf, Dawn Przychodzien. Zoom: Bill Lyons. Staff: DPW Director Peter Rice, Acting Deputy Fire Chief for Prevention Chad Putney, Planning & Sustainability Director Peter Britz, DPW Project Manager Christine Sproviero, Stephanie Seacord (recording secretary). Zoom: City Engineer Eric Eby,. Excused: Chair Annie Hopkins, Anne Torrez, Freddie Petrone, Ryan Harper, Annie Poubeau. A quorum was not present, so no votes were taken.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT** – Doug Roberts, 247 Richards Ave. Former Parking & Traffic Safety Committee chair observed that there can be a gap between approval of bike/ped network improvements and implementation if they are only undertaken in conjunction with DPW projects that disturb the roads and that there are opportunities in transition spaces for signage and minor efforts such as striping that would improve bike/ped experiences and awareness. One example is where the bike lane on Maplewood ends at the by-pass. He suggested continuing the bike lane, traffic calming and median island treatment in place between Woodbury and the Bypass or note that there is a transition. He suggested a pilot model with this treatment in the South End around the Middle School to start building the biking infrastructure. Director Rice noted that several projects have or are including bike lanes separate from road construction: Borthwick Avenue, Woodbury, Prescott Lane (former Christmas Tree Shops site, working with the developer on a multi-use path). He also advised that Parking & Traffic Safety has suggested creating a public webpage to collect resident suggestions for bike/ped changes similar to the traffic calming request page.
4. **PRESENTATIONS – Safe Systems Approach (see attached presentation)**
Tyler Garzo reported from the Complete Streets Work Group their high priority, low cost, Complete Street compliant recommendations for adopting Safe System language and philosophies:
 - “Crash” instead of “Accident”
 - Contributing factors in street design instead of Pedestrian fault
 - Addressing potential design causes in advance instead of waiting for injuries or fatalities.

Director Britz agreed that the City would continue to use Safe System language as

already adopted in the 2025 Bike/Pedestrian Plan (cf. p. 91). Vice Chair Glenn commented that although the Committee could not vote on a recommendation at this meeting that the next step might be for the City Council to receive and vote on adopting Safe System as a Citywide policy. Director Rice, Director Britz and City Engineer for Parking, Transportation and Planning Eby agreed that Safe System is a common sense approach that helps implement the Bike/Ped Plan as a holistic and realistic policy.

5. NEW BUSINESS – Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Priorities (see attached presentation slides the Zoom recording did not capture)

Matt Glenn reported Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) priorities recommended by that Working Group after Director Britz explained the purpose of the CIP and Director Rice noted that CIP projects implemented each year are funded according to a formula of 2% (generally 1%) of the cash-funded capital expenses in the annual budget. (Non-cash funding comes from bonding, grants, public-private partnerships, etc.) Citizen CIP requests are due by September 18, so the Committee will have the opportunity at their Sep 3 meeting to discuss these suggested priorities further.

- The CIP lists \$14 million in projects grouped as Transportation initiatives *p. 129-130). The Committee would find it helpful to know the timelines for these projects. Director Britz explained that sometimes the projects move forward in implementation due to available funding, for example, from the Congestion/Air Quality grants or private developer concessions; but that the City felt it important to keep the projects in the CIP and track their progress.
- Work Group priorities, informed by crash data:
 - Downtown: last blocks of Middle Street to get to the Middle School
 - High speed areas on Lafayette and outer Woodbury Ave.
 - Connecting the rail trail with the C&J pathway, the Community Campus and Constitution Ave. and with better signage, with lower priority on the Walker Bungalow “Bike Boulevard” which has low use.
 - Maplewood as a “Complete Street” was included in the 2018 CIP but was removed. Director Rice explained that Maplewood is now included in a water main project, between Dennett and the bypass, but not past the railroad tracks. However, the section between Hanover and the railroad tracks will be excavated and repaved. Glenn commented that Maplewood is an essential bike link, connecting North Mill Pond, with no parallel route and the width of Maplewood offers the opportunity to create bike lanes. Director Rice agreed that restriping after the repaving made sense and noted the planned pedestrian (bike) corridor planned when the 2 Russell Street private development is completed.
 - Maple Haven link between the playground and the rail trail – Director Rice reported that this project is now in wetlands permitting and that he expects the project construction will be completed in-house. Lurie-Meyerkopf urged signage to inform users.
 - Link to C&J – Director Rice agreed this is ‘low hanging fruit’ to add signage from the Borthwick multi-use path.
 - Greenland Road path connecting Peverly Hill to Sherburne – Director Rice reported the plan is to widen the sidewalk and connect the rail trail and skate park but there are some challenges in the section over the railroad bridge.
 - Bill Lyons commented that these CIP requests were recommendations from the Sustainability Committee for multi-modal alternatives opportunities to increase the use of public transportation:
 - a. Augment/reconfigure COAST routes
 - b. Study on-demand micro-transit

- c. Shuttle loop pilot project (also addressing recent RAPP suggestions)

The Working Group recommends a Micro Transit Task Force (Councilor Tabor) including businesses, Portsmouth Housing Authority, COAST, Portsmouth Hospital, Liberty Mutual, hospitality employers. Director Rice noted the City Council appropriated \$50,000 for a consultant to evaluate the idea using existing data and engage stakeholders including COAST to consider solutions such as private sector investment. Lyons noted that the Committee should play a role to advocate for the initiative.

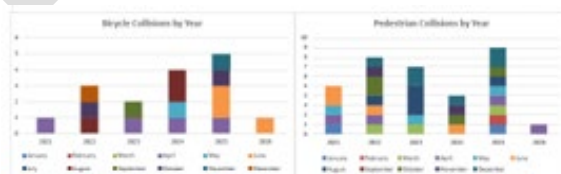
6. OLD BUSINESS – None.

7. INFORMATIONAL

- a. Working Groups status updates, reports back:

- **Bike/ped connectivity to multi-modal city:** Lyons reported that the members including Garzo, Daley, Lurie-Meyerkopf along with a few Sustainability Committee members, are focusing on explaining the 'why' in addition to the 'what' to make multi-modal connections and to communicate the benefits to the community: addressing parking supply/demand, ameliorating the cost of gas, public health, economic development from car-free tourism. The group will prepare some slides and fact sheets for meetings. Next meeting August 24.
- **The Community Outreach and Education** group did not meet but invited Director Britz to address the status of the Safe Routes to School program:
 - Adopted in 2005 with a Safe Routes to School grant (shifted into Transportation Alternatives), incorporating the Middle School, three elementary schools and St. Patrick's with intersection improvements, sidewalk bump outs to narrow crossings and bike safety classes for children and creating new regs for e-bikes.
 - Supported the Bike/Walk to School Day with PD but needs support at each school/parents to reinforce. Can add outreach resources on the City website.
 - Lurie-Meyerkopf asked if there could be outreach to reduce the student drop-off lines: perhaps a FlashVote to learn impediments: quality time for parents with kids? Safety concerns? Would bike trains help? Suggested holding a public information meeting to provide basic information on taking advantage of Safe Routes to School.
 - SABR has partnered with the Recreation Department to present annual Bike Safety Rodeos.

- b. **Police Report** – 1 pedestrian, 1 bicycle collision this year. Report at each meeting.



The Committee would like to see more granular detail.

- c. **Ocean Road** – A resident has requested sidewalks, which would require a lengthy process of property-taking to implement as the ROW, tree-trimming etc. are a State road responsibility. Preference is the Maple Haven-to-rail trail alternative path.
- d. **Edmond Avenue** – In preliminary design. One of the DPW utility project that will include streetscape – sidewalk from Woodbury to Maplewood. Challenge is a

large drainage line that must go under I-95 and poses some easement challenges. Christine Sproviero is DPW Project Manager. Construction should take about a month and a half. Engineer Eby will be reviewing yield street/narrow street option rather than bike lane due to ROW constraints.

- e. **State Street** – investigating the crosswalk to the African Burying Ground Memorial with a traffic count camera to determine if a flashing beacon is needed to increase safety.
- f. **Urban SDK speed and volume database** will give City access to anonymous data from in-vehicle sources (GPS, etc. not cellphones). Will allow sorting of data by every road, day, hour, average speed, season – to identify hot spots. Proposal currently being reviewed by the Legal Department.
- g. **Fleet Street One-Way and Counter-flow bike lane** – Engineer Eby relayed his report to P&TS, adopting the recommendations of the Committee at the July meeting: Changing the traffic flow on Fleet Street to one-way from Congress Street to Hanover Street will allow for wider sidewalks while keeping on-street parking spaces while also allowing for the provision of a 6-foot-wide marked and signed counterflow bike lane from Hanover Street to Congress Street. The parking spaces would be relocated from the west side of Fleet Street to the east side.
- h. **Peverly Hill Road** – Making progress on securing easements (have 12, need 8 more). In Conservation Commission review for wetlands permitting, The goal is to design and bid in Nov-Dec 2026 for construction in spring 2027.

8. MISCELLANEOUS

- a. **Complete Streets Policy Review** – Director Rice reported the idea is for P&TS to meet with the Committee for a collaborative review and policy recommendations to Council. That plan needs more Legal review so is postponed to next month. He reminded the Committee that the Fire Department has final say but that all seek solutions that will work.
- b. **Meeting timeframe** – Lurie-Meyerkopf suggested and the Committee agreed by consensus that the Bike/Pedestrian Network Committee monthly meeting should run from 6 to 7:30 pm. Vice Chair Glenn suggested this idea – and any other Agenda topics – should be submitted to Councilor Hopkins, chair. The Agenda is set nine days (the Tuesday) before the next week's meeting date.

9. ADJOURNMENT – The Committee adjourned at 7:38 pm.

Next meeting: Thursday, September 3, 2026.

Adopting a Safe System Approach

What it is, and what it changes in practice

How safety decisions are usually made

Wait for a crash history to justify action

Count how many crashes happen

Ask who was at fault

Under a Safe System

Identify the conditions for a severe crash before anyone is hurt

Focus on what kills or seriously injures

Ask what design let an ordinary mistake become an injury

The core idea: speed decides whether a crash is survivable. Where people walk and bike among cars, speeds must be low. Where speeds are high, modes must be separated.

It's already in our plan

Bicycle & Pedestrian Network Plan Update 2025, page 91

“Adopt a Safe System Approach”

“...a guiding paradigm adopted by the U.S. DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy that focuses on both human mistakes and human vulnerability to design a system with many redundancies in place to protect all road users.”

High priority

Low cost

Complementary to our Complete Streets Policy

The plan already tells us to do this. This is about implementing it.

What a Safe System means

People make mistakes

Everyone errs. The system should expect it, not depend on perfect behavior.

People are vulnerable

Our bodies have limits. Speed and design decide whether a mistake is survivable.

Build in redundancy

So that when a mistake happens, it doesn't become a fatality.

“The pedestrian was at fault” describes a system that failed to be forgiving — not the end of discussion.

The Safe System question: **what about this location let an ordinary mistake become an injury?**

One easy first step: the words we use

“Crash,” not “accident” — no cost, and we are most of the way there.

Portsmouth PD already did it

Their reports are uniform crash reports.

So has the federal government

NHTSA, FHWA and FMCSA dropped “accident”;
“crash” or “collision” are both endorsed.

“Accident” suggests the outcome was unavoidable.

“Crash” keeps the focus on prevention,
which is the whole point of a Safe System.

What we're asking

- 1 Endorse the Safe System Approach as the committee's framework, per the plan.
- 2 Use “crash” in our materials and discussion.
- 3 Design for the mistakes people will make, not the behavior we wish they had.

CIP Bike/Ped Priorities

Ranked by the plan's crash data and criteria: use, safety, mode-shift.

TOP: Downtown, high-use	TBD
Middle St, last blocks · Maplewood (Deer St to bypass)	
High Crash	\$4M / \$2M
Lafayette Rd · Outer Woodbury Ave	
Rail-trail / C&J links - easy to rally	\$1.5M+
Greenland Rd · N Mill Pond · Community Campus	
LOWER / defer	defer
Walker Bungalow “bike blvd” · Constitution MUP	

Lead With: Maplewood

Deer St to the bypass: real downtown work that makes a popular trail a destination.

Why it leads

Same downtown challenge as Middle St but no political baggage.

Essential bike link, no parallel route.

Connects N Mill Pond / Greenway, a top interest already on Council's radar.

Two CIP layers

Capital projects - push the top ones toward real funding.

Repaving overlay - add bike/ped to streets already being torn up. Paint is cheap. Advocate before bid.

Ask for the 12–24 month project + repaving list, so we catch both early.