

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON February 12, 2015 at 7:00pm.

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

DATE PREPARED: February 26, 2015

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

ATTENDEES: David Allen, Deputy City Manager, Portsmouth
Jason DeGray, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Eric Eby, Portsmouth DPW
Joe Johnson, Greenman-Pedersen, Inc.
Peter Rice, Portsmouth DPW
Conor Semler, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.
Juliet Walker, Portsmouth Planning Department
See attached sign-in

PURPOSE: Conceptual Design Public Meeting

Discussion:

Mr. DeGray made a presentation describing the meeting agenda, project background and project purpose. He also discussed the project limits as well as some of the existing characteristics of the Lafayette Road/Middle Street corridor. He summarized the input that was gathered as part of the initial public meeting held on November 19, 2014. Based on the public concerns expressed, there were three bicycle accommodation concepts developed for the corridor. Although the concepts focused on bicycle accommodations, this is a 'complete street' project since the improvements directly impact the pedestrian and vehicle experience. Although there is no anticipated change to the existing roadway width, the reallocation/organization of the space between cars, parking and bicyclists will result in a perceived narrowing of the travel way which typically results in lower vehicular travel speeds. Also, by delineating no parking zones within 25 feet of intersections, sight distance will be improved for vehicles accessing Lafayette Road/Middle Street. By adding a bicycle facility and designated parking areas, the effective roadway crossing length will be reduced for pedestrians decreasing their exposure to vehicle traffic.

Mr. Semler provided an overview of each concept prepared for the project. These consist of the following:

- Concept A – Two-Way Cycle Track
- Concept B – Buffered Bike Lanes
- Concept C – Traditional Bike Lanes

Advantages/disadvantages of each were discussed with particular attention focused on the varying level of comfort that cyclists experience with each of these concepts.

After the presentation, there was an opportunity for questions and comments. Following are the major points of discussion:

Will the project introduce more crosswalks along the corridor?

The project can be used as an opportunity to identify where additional crosswalks may be needed. However, actual improvements associated with this project are anticipated to consist of pavement markings. Additional crosswalks may require new wheelchair ramps which would be considered as part of a separate project.

With the introduction of a bike facility, where are motor vehicles supposed to stop at minor street approaches to Lafayette Road/Middle Street?

The stop line location along minor street approaches is not expected to move. Vehicles will be required to stop where they do today, check for bicycles/vehicles and proceed when there is a sufficient gap.

There is a concern that pavement markings will not slow traffic. Could a mid-block pedestrian signal be introduced to stop traffic?

This is considered an incremental project where the first step includes striping improvements to define a dedicated bicycle facility. Moving forward, the City will remain committed to make adjustments as necessary and based on how driver characteristics change. Although pavement marking improvements are anticipated as part of this project, more permanent features may be introduced as part of a future project if the striping improvements prove successful.

Could Concept A move the bicycle lanes to the curb?

Concept A could not simply move the bike lane adjacent to the curb without introducing a buffer from the on-street parking stalls. Otherwise, passenger side car doors would open into the bike lane.

How are property values impacted by bicycle facilities?

Given the limited number of bicycle facilities, we are not aware of data available regarding this question. Generally speaking, people have a desire to live in locations where biking and walking opportunities are available. This is often seen when property values increase when multi-use paths are constructed in close proximity.

Would the City consider progressing from Concept A to Concept B to eventually Concept C?

Not necessarily, the project is intended to implement the best suited facility to accomplish the objectives.

Are there standards/metrics when there are too many access points/driveways where a cycle track may become unsafe?

There is limited data available for cycle tracks regarding this question. Signing, striping and public outreach will be critical so that drivers and bicyclists understand how safe access to driveways should occur.

When there are buffered bike lanes, do bicyclists comply with travelling in the proper direction?

Yes, provided the facility was adequately design.

What are the parking impacts of these concepts?

An inventory of the parking demand was performed along this corridor. Although parking is basically allowed along the entire corridor, the demand is much higher along the north end of the project. Some vehicles could be displaced by these concepts on a block-by-block basis depending upon final design decisions.

Andrew Jarvis to South Street is a dangerous stretch along Lafayette Road. Greenleaf is a tough intersection.

The character from Andrew Jarvis to South Street is quite different from the rest of the corridor and it may not be appropriate to use the same bicycle facility within these limits as the rest of the corridor. Also, on-street parking generally does not occur within these limits. It may be appropriate to sign no-parking along these limits.

Would this bicycle facility be intended for four-season use? Does the City support the potential maintenance?

The City is committed to the project and would not construct the improvements otherwise. Four-season use is envisioned, but is highly dependent on snow amounts.

Emergency vehicles need to be able to fit between two vehicles that have pulled over for an emergency vehicle.

There will be continued coordination with City Staff as the project advances toward a preferred design.

Following are the comments that were noted on the roll plans depicting the three Concepts:

Concept A:

- Sight distance is a problem at the Union Street intersection.
- A ped/bike crossing light is needed across Middle Street in the vicinity of Wibird/Madison.
- A ped/bike crossing light is needed across Middle Street at Union Street.
- A ped/bike crossing light is needed across Middle Street at Mendum Avenue.
- More pedestrian crossings are needed at side streets (general comment).
- Fix the Greenleaf intersection.
- There were 8 stickers of 'support' on this concept.

Concept B:

- I like Concept B the best of the 3 options. The cyclists are protected which will encourage kids w/parents to use the lanes.
- There were 4 stickers of 'support' on this concept.

Concept C:

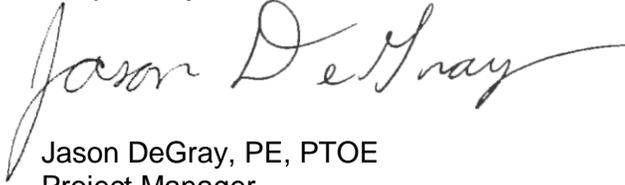
- This is my least favorite of the three options especially if we are trying to encourage children to bike to school. They are not protected from moving traffic.
- There were 2 stickers of 'support' on this concept.

Also attached are written comments obtained the night of the meeting as well as subsequent to the meeting.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason DeGray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

Jason DeGray, PE, PTOE
Project Manager

cc: City Staff Attendees