

Bike/Pedestrian Committee 2024 Annual Report

Contributing Members: Rosemarie De Angelis, Chair; Members: Alan Mills, Jeff Woodbury, Carl Eppich, Tex Haueser, Jean Sideris (Bicycle Coalition of Maine), Anthony Grande, Lacey Kremer (Civil/Transportation Engineer, Public Works), Officer Rocco Navarro (SPPD), Harrington Currie (Sustainability Coordinator); Councilor Steve Riley, Melissa Hutchins (Staff liaison/PW Director)

SPECIAL THANKS and Welcome—Our thanks to Laura Mauldin for her years on the committee and her work as Secretary. Laura will be missed.

Thanks to Former Councilor Steve Riley for his year as liaison on our committee. Councilor Riley provided ideas, gave input and offered many suggestions that helped us in our work. Thanks, Steve.

Welcome to our newest member, Sam Merrill, who was just appointed by Mayor (former Councilor) Matthews. I am sure Sam will make great contributions and we all look forward to his new energy.

Welcome to Councilor Walker as the new Council representative to the Bike/Ped Committee. I am sure she will have ideas and suggestions to benefit our work.

Introduction

The South Portland Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee had significant accomplishments in 2024. The goal has been to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians in our community.

Communications with City Staff and Others

Given the involvement with staff members, (Liaisons: Michelle Hutchins (PW Director) and Officer Rocco Navarro (SP Police Department) this committee is incredibly fortunate. Bike/Ped has also been afforded the skill of Lacey Kramer (staff) and addition of Harrington Currie (Sustainable Transportation Coordinator); giving this committee access to information that is critical to our success.

Most specifically, **Melissa Hutchins of PW** has kept the committee abreast of all road/sidewalk or other related projects. Her attention to detail and her level of participation have benefited our work immensely.

Officer Rocco Navarro has provided the committee with details on traffic issues, speed studies and areas of citizen concerns. He provides us continual updates on crash data which is invaluable. He is key because of his relationships with citizens and often brings them to discuss issues at our meetings, which gives us true insight to the needs of the community.

Tony Grande is the committee's member from Age Friendly South Portland. His contributions have also been significant, including his assessment of available grant monies from AFSP and AARP. His knowledge as a Transportation Engineer is an added bonus for us.

Jean Sideris is our representative from Bicycle Coalition of Maine; she also lives in District 4 so she wears two hats, although her appointment is

as Executive Director of BCM. Jean brings a statewide vision for cyclist needs, which is a great resource for this committee. Unfortunately, Jean had to (at least temporarily) move back to Colorado to help her folks, so, as of December, she is not on the committee any longer.

ACTIVITIES and ACCOMPLISHMENTS—during the 2024 annual year (not in any particular order)

1. Multiple traffic schedule changes, recommended by Officer Navarro and supported by PW Director Hutchins, including parking restrictions easterly side (one side parking) 50 feet from intersection of Main Street and Huntress Ave and intersection of Main and Haskell (same parking restrictions for both roads) to clear up congestion reported by neighbors. We also added several no parking signs on Myrtle (westerly) side heading towards the beach which coincides to match the parking schedule freeing up congestion on this narrow road. Regularly go over detailed car vs. bicycle or pedestrian crashes and brainstorm ideas/recommendations to make the areas safer. Involve the public in areas of concern and work to implement changes;
2. Neighborhood Byway work, specifically with the new middle school in mind, with ideas proposed and continued guidance by M. Hutchins and R. Navarro;
3. Hill Street redesign—not completed but this committee has worked on providing ideas/input for past two years. This work continues;
4. Phase 3 of the Westbrook Street Multi use path with active support of Bike/Ped Committee. Done to completion;
5. Yard South Project —reviewed and supported presentation by PK Realty to discuss the bike/pedestrian impacts. While this project was withdrawn, the Committee appreciated being included in the preliminary work;
6. Entrance to the Veterans' Bridge—addressed concerns;
7. Changes in crossing guard placement—monitored w/BPC/R. Navarro;
8. Bridge restriping—lead from PW Director Hutchins. This was a huge accomplishment with the highest of kudos to PW Director Hutchins.

After having had resident input and many Committee discussions about the inadequacy of bicycle facilities on the Casco Bay Bridge, the Committee celebrated PW Director Melissa Hutchins' success in working with MaineDOT to decrease travel lane widths and thereby increase the width and buffer of the bike lanes on the bridge. This was a significant accomplishment by Ms. Hutchins given the agency's past recalcitrance, and it demonstrated the strong working relationship between the Committee and staff representative;

9. Gorham Connector: sponsored presentation by Mike Myles;
10. Comprehensive Plan—continued work with Eli Rubin, Planning;
11. Worked closely with Sydney Raftery on Greenbelt speed issues. Presentation on new data in January 2025;
12. Trail connecting Highland Avenue—Worked with the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department in exploring the feasibility of creating the trail to the Greenbelt Walkway through City land adjacent to Highland Cemetery. Continued our work on this with a goal to recognize Erik Weisenburger for his contribution to this work;
13. More RRFBs (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons)—Supported proposal for multiple places in city;
14. Consolidation of SP Bus and Metro—gave support of committee;
15. Traffic calming measures—implemented several including bump outs, delineators, signage, speed trailer deployments, temporary speed bumps and increased enforcement of problematic areas (problematic areas were identified through an abundance of traffic studies using our state of the art equipment from our contract with All Traffic Solutions).
16. West End Trails--liaison Jeff Woodbury reports regularly to Bike/Ped Committee;
17. Land Trust—Tex Haeuser reports on any LT issues that overlap/need our attention;
18. Reviewed all traffic changes approved and implemented.

FUTURE GOALS For Bike/Ped Committee 2025

1. Support funding for the Multi Use Path on Lincoln Street
2. Consider contact with driver education classes to include teaching pedestrian and bicycle safety. Not completed in 2024 so on 2025 list;
3. Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety;
4. Improve access to public transportation with efforts to add free rides for all minors. This will be supported after SP joins with Metro;
5. Continue to create walking paths and trails;
6. Continue to improve existing paths and trails;
7. Participate in discussions regarding roads/sidewalks;
8. Continue to monitor crash data and offer solutions (Navarro);
9. Continue to support a safe bicycle/pedestrian route from east to west, specifically with opening of new middle school;
10. Create training for students/parents regarding safe bike routes. Involve schools wherever possible;
11. Continue to assist in development of the bike/ped portion of the comprehensive plan;
12. Continue to monitor legislative actions that impact traffic/speed limits and affects bicycle and pedestrian safety issues;
13. Continue to monitor any changes regarding Electric Bicycles and their role in South Portland;
14. Propose a dedication for Erik Weisenburger;
15. Complete more on Greenbelt safety education plan;
16. Continue education on school bus issues;
17. Continue to review all traffic changes approved and implemented;
18. Continue to advocate for completion of Bike/Ped Plan;
19. Continue work on Highland Ave safety issues (HS to Brown);
20. Continue to advocate for line item in budget for Bike/Ped Committee;

Thanks to Staff--The Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee would like to express sincere gratitude to the city staff of South Portland who have done incredible work over the past three years. Specifically, the police and fire departments work hard to keep citizens safe. Public Works has continued

to keep roads and sidewalks clear and safe; Parks and Rec have facilitated the safe use of parks and open spaces.

Other accomplishments in the city, supported by Bike/Ped Committee

- Sand for Seniors—important and successful program
- Karl Coughlin and Parks and Rec staff who keep paths open at Hinkley Park and Bug Light and more.
- The General Assistance staff who all help our newest residents.
- Jessica Hughes, City Clerk, and the full staff for assisting us when needed.
- The Transportation Department has kept busses operating, safe, clean and courteous.
- The work of the South Portland Food Cupboard, feeding hundreds on an ongoing basis.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosemarie De Angelis, Chair