## Park Avenue Bicycle Audit

May 18th, 2025

Prepared by:

Libbytown Neighborhood Association
Parkside Neighborhood Association
Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee



## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	4
Issues and Concerns	
Recommendations	5
Option #1: Two-way Bike Lane on the North Side of the street from Preble Street to the planned traffic circle at Congress Street	7
Option #2: Restore the conventional unprotected bike lane on the south side of Park Avenue	9
Option #3: Update the existing design & devise a plan for maintenance and repairs	10
Scope	11
History	11
Crash Data	12
Major Problems	12

Major problem #1. The facility ends and turns into a traditional bike lane–just when the conditions become more dangerous on both ends of the facility	12
Major problem #2 Multiple instances and types of poor sight lines	12
Major Problem 3:Maintenance and Obstructions:	14
Major problem 4: Infrastructure deficiencies	15
Major problem 5: Intersections	15
Acknowledgement	17
Appendix	18
A. Glossary	18
B. Crash Data Findings	19
C. Historical references:	
2013 CIP Project Justification Form	
D. Zack Barowitz's article from the 2018 Portland Phoenix	21
E: Survey results	22

### **Executive Summary**

On Sunday, May 18, 2025 the Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee held a bicycle ride audit to evaluate the parking separated bike lanes that run along Park Avenue from Forest Avenue to Saint John Street. The audit was attended by twenty people including members of Portland Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (PBPAC), members of the Parkside, Libbytown, and Bayside neighborhood associations as well as Councilors Wes Pelletier, Sarah Michniewicz, and Pious Ali.

We set out to evaluate the parking separated bike lanes that were installed in September of 2018 and the general safety of traveling through the corridor. Although this type of facility has been successful elsewhere, the consensus on the Portland implementation is decidedly mixed. Proponents like the added security of being separated from traffic, whereas, critics cite multiple hazards from driveways mostly on the south side of the street (there are twenty-seven of them on the six block stretch and fourteen in the two blocks from Weymouth Street to Mellen Street). The project has suffered from poor maintenance, high curbs and the fact that the facility was meant to be a trial to see if it should be implemented elsewhere in the city.

In light of the structural and systemic deficiencies of the design, PBPAC recommends to either

- 1. Removing the separated bike lane on the south side (east bound) of the street, and convert the north side lane into a two-way cycle track (most preferable), or
- 2. Restore the conventional bike lane to the south side of the corridor (less preferably).

Either recommendation should include an effort to calm traffic around crosswalks and consider how to make pedestrians in crosswalks safer in every design decision about Park Avenue. Design updates and a maintenance program for the south side lane would improve the conditions, but not eliminate the structural flaws inherent to the design, and thus represent the least preferable improvement.

#### **Issues and Concerns**

During the course of our ride we encountered several issues impacting the usability and effectiveness of the bike lanes. We also were provided additional information on the usability of the lanes by participants. They include:

- 1. **Dangerous Intersections**, which lack sufficient **daylighting**<sup>1</sup> or other elements of protected intersections.
- Crosswalks with long crossing distances are problematic for people with mobility issues. There has been an increase in pedestrian crashes in crosswalks, with a 37% increase in the six years after the installation vs. the six years prior.
- 3. Leaves, trash, & debris are not regularly removed for the bike lanes.
- **4. Blue recycling bins are regularly placed in the bike lane on trash day,** which makes the southside virtually **impassable once per week.**
- 5. Snow & Ice piles up in the bike lanes during the winter. The lanes are sometimes not cleared at all.
- **6. Driveways** can present conflicting sight-distances and lack compliant driveway aprons, allowing cars to turn into them guickly or back out of them blindly.
- **7. Sunken Storm Drains and potholes** create pinch points, bumps and holes that are hazardous and force bicyclists into the door zone.
- 8. Narrow bike lanes positioned next to high curbs increase the risk of crashes due to pedal strikes.
- 9. **Improper** parking frequently completely blocks the bike lane, especially in winter and by buses during events such as Sea Dogs games.
- **10. Motorists turning right on the south side of Park Avenue** have low visibility for seeing cyclists who are hidden behind the parked cars.
- 11. Motorists using the bikelane as a loading zone

Shortly after the audit PBPAC conducted a survey of the Park Avenue bike lanes, although opinions and preferences were myriad, only 17% of the (47) respondents suggested keeping the facility as is. This report aims to evaluate the bike lanes and make recommendations for improvements which will hopefully inform whether protected bike lanes can or should be used in other parts of Portland. (Interestingly, 74% of our survey participants were non-members of the committee.)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Daylighting is the concept of not allowing parking within a specified distance of an intersection allowing for additional visibility of the side street and traffic movements related to it.

#### Recommendations

If the City of Portland is serious about complete streets and its Vision Zero plan, then innovative bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure must be developed across the city. The parking separated bike lanes on Park Avenue, while an innovative concept, needs significant improvement. Furthermore, a commitment must be made to properly maintain this and other bicycle infrastructure in Portland.

Analysis of crash data and anecdotal evidence given by attendees and others indicates that significant improvements are needed if bicycle facilities on Park Avenue are to succeed in making bicycling safer. Since the implementation of the protected bike lanes the total number of automobile injury crashes has gone down significantly on Park Avenue where the design exists. Crashes have not been reduced at the Forest Avenue intersection at the start of Portland Street as it continues to Preble Street. Reported bicycle crashes have increased slightly, although by such a small amount that solid conclusions cannot be made. Pedestrian crashes have increased more noticeably and have increased significantly in crosswalks. Ultimately, it's clear that the Park Avenue bike lanes have not made cyclists or pedestrians safer, but has made the corridor safer for motorists. Further changes are needed to ensure that Park Avenue is safe for all users, while maintaining that increased safety for motorists, as Vision Zero includes all transportation.

The lack of maintenance has reduced many people's confidence in the city's commitment to bicycle friendly infrastructure. A few attendees were against any further attempts at parking separated lanes due to poor winter maintenance and a failure to find a solution to road hazards in the bike lanes. The final consensus of attendees and survey participants is that we need to work to fix these bike lanes. The corrective process will serve as a valuable object lesson to inform the planning of additional protected bike lanes in other parts of the city.

One of the key recommendations from the group is that the bike lanes should be consistent for long stretches of the street. Moving from one type of infrastructure to another as you are riding along confuses both bicylists and drivers.

PBPAC and stakeholders have developed the following recommendations, listed in order of preference. While we prefer Option 1, a combination of options may also be prudent over time. Some of the immediate improvements in Option 3 might be implemented to reduce hazards. The restoration of the conventional lane option may be a good *temporary* solution while funding is secured to implement the *best* solution as described in Option 1.

# Option # 1: Create a two-way bike lane on the north side of the street from Preble Street to the planned traffic circle at Congress Street.

There are various types of bike lanes utilized around the world. One of those is a two-way bikeway that isolates and protects bicycles from vehicle movements (except at intersections). In terms of space usage within the right of way, this method provides some significant advantages over bike lanes on either side of the street.

Park Avenue in Portland offers an ideal opportunity to provide a comprehensive yet compact version of this concept.





We recommend that Portland plans for and develops a two-way bike lane from Preble Street to the planned traffic circle at Congress Street<sup>2</sup>. Bike lane infrastructure should allow for travel between various parts of the city. One of the failures of the existing Park Avenue bike lanes is that they only run for a short stretch from High Street to St. John Street. The bike lanes should get significantly more use if they fed into more neighborhoods of Portland. An argument could be made that a two-way bike lane should continue on Congress Street all the way to the Westbrook line. The design's sudden end at Forest Avenue as Park Avenue becomes Portland Street contributes to the failure of this dangerous intersection.

Due to the two way operation, these lanes would need to continue to be parking separated. We are suggesting that it be installed on the north side of the street as it has far fewer impediments along the entire recommended route. This report leaves the road design to the actual designers of the infrastructure.

#### Pros

- A two-way bike lane solves the problem of wrong-way bicycling, as it allows bicycling in both directions.
- Dedicated, protected space for bicyclists makes it an attractive facility for riders of all levels and ages.
- Lower implementation cost compared to street reconstruction by making use of existing pavement and drainage.
- Reduces or eliminates risk and fear of collisions with opening parked car doors and overtaking vehicles.
- Discourages double parking in the bike lane.
- Improves perceived safety for bicycle riders.
- Easier maintenance as only one path needs to be maintained and it would be large enough for access by conventional vehicles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Funding for the "<u>Historic Libbytown Project Improvement</u>" which includes the traffic circle is currently rescinded, however efforts are being made to fund the planning of the project so it will be shovel ready.

#### Cons

- Intersections can be a challenge as motorists must look both ways when crossing bi-directional lane.
- Special provisions for turns or turn bans may be required, especially left turns which require a protected phase to cross both opposing vehicle traffic and the bike lanes.
- Protected phases are possible only at major intersections, they cannot be implemented at unsignalized side streets and driveways.

## Option # 2: Leave the protected bike lane on the north side and restore the conventional unprotected bike lane on the south side of Park Avenue

Almost all the hazards we have identified with the existing infrastructure (driveways, blue bins, potholes, sunken storm drains, poor sight lines) are associated with the south side lane. The simple solution would be to eliminate the lane altogether and install a street side bike lane. This approach would visually widen the roadway, which may lead to increased vehicle speeds and reduced safety.

#### Pros

- The south side parking-protected lane as it currently exists gets less sunlight and snow melt which causes uncleared snow to remain in the lane rendering it unusable.
- An on-street lane would be easier to maintain in all seasons.
- Replacing the parking-protected lane on the south side with a conventional bike lane could allow the north side lane to be widened from 5' to 6'

#### Cons

- A wider north side lane might encourage more people riding against the direction of traffic in the bike lane, as might having a protected lane on only one side of the street. People incorrectly riding the wrong direction in the northside protected bike lane would be safer with a wider lane however, 17% of riders already ride in the wrong direction on Park Avenue. [link to BCM study. Where is it?]
- An unprotected bike lane is less comfortable for some riders.

## Option # 3: Update the existing design of the entire roadway and devise a plan for maintenance and repairs

The committee does not support leaving the bike lanes as they are, but in the near term, we recommend the following measures to make the entire roadway safer. The parking separated lanes on Park Avenue have not succeeded in making cycling or walking safer and may have made walking less safe. If we keep them, they must be improved. We suggest these necessary improvements:

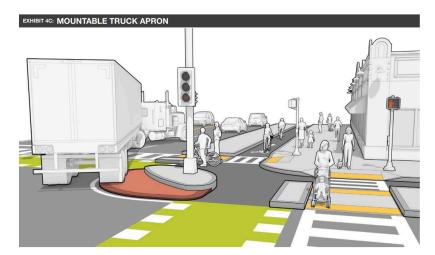
## 1. Daylighting<sup>3</sup> & protected intersections as outlined in the Massachusetts DOT<sup>4</sup> separated bike lane guidelines:

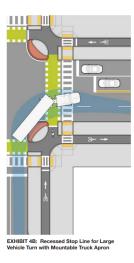
a. Add daylighting zones at all interactions. This would necessitate the removal of some parking at the various intersections, but would significantly increase visibility of cars and pedestrians.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Daylighting is the concept of not allowing parking within a specified distance of an intersection allowing for additional visibility of the side street and traffic movements related to it.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> <u>MassDOT Separated Bike Lane Planning & Design Guide 2015, Chapter 4: Intersection Design, (Massachusetts Department of Transportation 2015)</u>

b. Install pedestrian crossing islands in the daylighting areas (shortening crossing distances) and build corner refuge islands, as described in chapter 4 of the Mass DOT separated design guide.





### 2. Improve Maintenance and Road Repairs:

Many users reported that they regularly encounter obstacles including recycling bins, potholes, bottles and other debris, leaves, sand, and unplowed snow and ice.

- a. Better maintenance would alleviate these hazards. However, the facility is challenging from an operational perspective. For example, it is difficult to get people to stop putting their blue bins into the bike lane. If you can even get a plow to fit in the lane it still presents the problem of where to actually put the snow.
- b. There are several sunken storm drains and manholes that create obstacles for bicyclists. The storm drains and manholes need to be made flush with the pavement so that bicyclists don't even notice them.

We do not favor this third option because the design deficiencies, such as driveways, narrow lanes and lack of daylighting would still exist.

### **Major Problems That Were Identified**

## Problem # 1 The bike lanes end and turn into a traditional bike lane just when the conditions become more dangerous on both ends of the facility.

Although the bike lanes were installed on the widest parts of Park Avenue where riding with traffic is probably least safest, the infrastructure ends on both ends at points where they are needed most.

- 1. At west end of the facility from the railroad trestle to I-295:
  - a. The speed of motor traffic increases after St. John Street as motorists accelerate at the highway entrances in Libbytown. At the same time, bicyclists are slowed down because there is a short and deceptively steep hill in this section.
  - b. The bike lane then ends where it crosses the entrance to the highway on-ramp (I-295 South) creating a conflict that can be harrowing for cyclists.
- 2. At Forest Avenue end, the facility ends at a complex and dangerous intersection becoming a standard side of the road bike lane on the south side of the street. On the north side several conflicts come together with the post offices entrances and the bus stop.

## Problem # 2 Infrastructure deficiencies including multiple driveways on the south side of the street

The most significant issue with the separated bike lanes are seen on the south side of the street. There are twenty-seven driveways on the south side of the six block stretch, fourteen of which are in the two blocks from Weymouth Street to Mellen Street. The driveways can cause a particular hazard because motorists vision is focused out into the main roadway (to avoid other cars) but can often miss a fast moving cyclist right in front of them because of the perceptional phenomenon known as *optical flow*.

- 1. Even though the roadway is basically straight, parked cars and driveways reduce the sight distances.
- 2. The lack of daylighting at intersections.
- 3. Ticketing of improperly parked cars is not done, unless they are more than 50% in a no parking zone.
- 4. Lane widths & curb heights are not sufficient for cyclists to ride two abreast. In order for the lane to meet standards of the current width, the curb heights should be lowered to prevent crashes from pedal strikes of the curb.

### **Problem #3 Maintenance and Obstructions**

Participants noted issues with maintenance and the issue of recycling/trash being set out in the bike lanes, as well as drains and broken pavement obstructing the bike lanes. Many pictures have been sent in, which demonstrate the point well: [Move the Caption text to the tops of the pages, Storm Drains can be on this page.]

Storm Drains. Sewer grates & manholes - create depressions in the lane surface and are slippery when wet:



Storm drains often take up half or more of the bike lane, forcing cyclists into the buffer zone







Blue recycle bins block the Bicycle lane, sometimes for over 24 hours



Broken Pavement presents a hazard and distraction











Cars block or infringe throughout, and during game nights, buses and crowds block the bike lane in front of Hadlock Field

### **Problem # 5: Intersections**

Intersections are generally the most dangerous part of any roadway, but each of Park Avenue's intersections is challenging in its own way.

- 1. Saint John Street:
  - a. The transition from 2-way to 1-way
  - b. Poor lighting under the railroad trestle
  - c. Increased motorist speeds after passing the railroad trestle
- 2. Gilman Street:
  - a. The [Need Content]
- 3. Forest Street:
  - a. The [Need Content]
- 4. Weymouth Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Turning traffic creates conflicts
  - c. Poor sightlines
- 5. Deering Avenue:
- 6. Steep hill [Need Content]
- 7. Mellen Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Poor sightlines
  - c. A recent bicyclist's death occurred here as they were turning left from Mellen on to Park Avenue
- 8. State Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Poor sightlines
  - c. Turning traffic creates conflicts
- 9. High Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Poor sightlines
  - Turning traffic creates conflicts
- 10. Forest Avenue:
  - a. This intersection is just as dangerous as it was prior to 2018, with the same amount of crashes post design as pre design: it is now just as dangerous as State and High, while relatively speaking, it used to be the safest!
  - b. Steep hill
  - c. Poor sightlines
  - d. Turning traffic creates conflicts
- 11. Mechanic Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Poor sightlines
  - c. Turning traffic creates conflicts
- 12. Hanover Street:
  - a. Steep hill
  - b. Poor sightlines
  - c. Turning traffic creates conflicts
- 13. Parris Street:

- a. Poor sightlines
- b. Turning traffic creates conflicts

Acknowledgemen	t
----------------	---

Attendees, credit for those who worked really hard on the report, acknowledgement of any host businesses, etc.

## **Appendix**

### A. Glossary

**Byclist** - A person on a bicycle, tricycle, or other similar conveyance (as opposed to a "biker" who rides a motorcycle).

**Cycle Track** - A cycle track is a designated path for bicycles that is separate from motor vehicle traffic, often located alongside roads and sometimes shared with pedestrians. It is designed to enhance safety and encourage cycling by reducing conflicts between cyclists and vehicles.

**Daylighting (hard and soft)** - Refers to removing sight obstructions (mainly parked cars) and replacing it with curb extensions, no parking areas, and other infrastructure to increase visibility at intersections

**Doored** - The act of a cyclist running into an open car door.

**Door Zone** - The narrow vertical area between a bike lane and a parking lane. This should be a painter buffer zone to protect cyclists from

**Door Zone Buffer** - a hashed area of paint between a bike lane and parked cars, typically 2? feet. NB: A doorzone buffer should be installed on either a Parking protected bike lane or a conventional bike lane.

Parking Protected Bike Lane - A bike lane that runs between the curb and a line of parked cars.

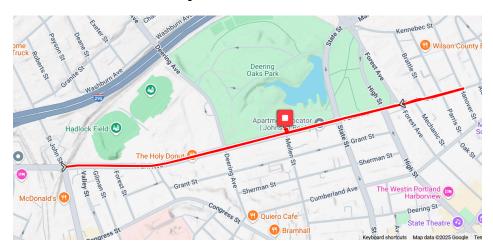
**Pedal Strike** - When a bicyclist's pedal hits the street or curb while riding. This can often result in a dangerous crash

**Optical Flow** - Optical flow is the way that we perceive speed and distance. It is what makes road signs whiz by, but distant mountains appear relatively static. The determinants of optical flow are distance and angle. Think of the sensation of a road sign 'speeding' up the closer you get to it, until it becomes just a flash in your peripheral vision. A car zooming five feet in front of you at 50mph will appear faster than one travelling the same speed that is 100 feet away.

**Salmoning** - Riding a bicycle against traffic either in a bike lane or on a street. This practice is considered dangerous as it increases the risk of accidents for both the cyclist and others on the road.

**Sight Distance** - the length of roadway a driver can see ahead, allowing them to react to hazards and make safe decisions. Major determining factors include curves, corners, hills, and peaks.

### B. History Of the Park Avenue Road Layout



[Need a Caption]

Until about 2012, Park Avenue was a four lane road between St. John Street and Forest Avenue. In late 2012 or 2013 a slip lane at St. John Street was removed, the roadway was reduced to two lanes, while adding occasional turning lanes and traditional bike lanes between St. John Street and Deering Avenue. Four lanes remained between Deering Avenue and Forest Avenue until September 2018.

The facility was constructed at the behest of a then-city councilor to add an innovative piece of infrastructure to the corridor. Unfortunately, due to limited funds, the design was done by student interns who had little knowledge of the subject. Although the project was presented as a trial, it has remained despite people having raised concerns over its safety and utility. There was no permanent infrastructure installed as part of the project and safety bollards, etc. are removed for winter maintenance.

In September 2018, the parking separated bike lanes were installed between Gilman Street and Forest Avenue, with the whole corridor reduced to two lanes with a center turning lane or intersection turning lanes. This installation was considered by PBPAC members to be a trial or an iterative design which might be improved on in future years. (See appendix for historical references.)

### B. Crash Data Findings<sup>5</sup>

Our analysis of safety data, pulled from Maine DoT's Crash Data Map, shows some surprising results.

The preinstallation time period of 2012 and 2017 was compared to the post installation period of 2019 to 2024 (the bike lanes were installed in the fall of 2018 so that year was not used, as the data was not available by month).

- 1. Pedestrian crashes increased by 37%, with an 80% reduction in midblock crashes and 233% increase in crashes at sidewalks.
- 2. There was no reduction in bicycle crashes, with an increase in just one crash over a 6 year period.
- 3. When factoring in automobile crashes, using the all injury crashes filter, there was a huge reduction in injury crashes 98 in the six years prior to installing the facility and 54 in the six years following the installation for an overall reduction of 45% of people injured. A smaller sample size of just two years prior and two following the installation showed a similar reduction in injury crashes, if automobile crashes are included.

The installation appears to have had no effect on Cyclists crashes, increased Pedestrian crashes, but reduced injury car crashes by 45%.

This analysis was not done by a professional, and does not take into account usage, as adequate data does not seem to exist. Further information is included in the Appendix, including a link to the spreadsheet used to compare data.

From Gilman Street to Forest Ave in the 6 years after the installation of Parking Separated Bike lanes, compared to the (6) years prior:

- 1. All injury crashes, including motorists, were reduced by 44.9%, from (98) to (54).
  - a. The bulk of this reduction is at the Deering Ave, State St. and High St. intersections, Forest Ave saw no changes.
- 2. Bicycle Crashes increased by 11%, from (9) to (10).
  - a. Crashes at intersections dropped by 1 in the new design, and midblock crashes went up by (2).
- 3. Pedestrian Crashes increased by 37%, from (8) to (11).
  - a. Intersection Crashes involving Pedestrians increased 233% from (3) to (10), while midblock Pedestrian crashes dropped by 80%, from (5) to (1).

From Forest Ave to Prebble Street there was no improvement in crashes, with a very similar number of injury crashes in both 6 year periods, 20 and 22 respectively, and bicycle and pedestrian crashes similarly very close, deviating by only 1 over a 6 year period.

### Maine DoT Maine Public Crash Mapping Query Tool

☐ Crash Data [Winston, Change the name of the file to Park Avenue Crash Data 20\_\_ to 20\_\_ so that it shows up in the link as such]

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Winston Lumpkins prepared the findings based on *Maine DoT's Maine Public Crash Mapping Query Tool* from the (6) years prior to the (6) years following the installation of protected bicycle lanes.

### C. Historical references:

2017

2013 CIP Project Justification Form. It took five years to actually build the infrastructure which was done with very little public engagement.

CIP 2013 - 2018	3	Public Serv	/ices			<b>ID</b> 339			
						<u>Total Score</u>			
<b>Division</b> Engineer	ing	Classification	Streets		New	39			
Project Title									
Reconfigure Park Avenue Bike/Ped (FHWA - St. John to Deering)									
Project Description									
Street Reconfiguration to add bicycle/pedestrian features via PACTS 12/13 TIP Program - PIN #19428.00									
Previous City Council authorization (Order #11-11/12) for 3-party agreement with MaineDOT and PACTS to deliver project in 2012. Project initially recommended by 2009 "Connecting Libbytown" Study.									
Budget Impact	Budget Impact								
Local Share obligation is \$28,002 plus Utility System ineligibles cost of \$25,000 totals request of \$53,002. Note City is also 100% responsible for final project costs exceeding Federal/State allocations.									
<b>Project Costs</b>									
Planning	<u>Land</u>	Construction	<u>Equipment</u>	Est Total Cost					
\$18,200		\$266,800		\$285,000					
<b>Funding Source</b>									
<u>Year</u> <u>St</u>	ate/Fed Grant	Other Grants	Other Funding	Requested					
2013	\$231,998			\$53,002					
2014									
2015 2016									
2010									

PPH August 8, 2018: Portland making it easier to pedal along Park Avenue

PPH September 9, 2018: Portland's Park Avenue lane changes get mixed marks

### D. Zack Barowitz 2018 Portland Phoenix Article

## Changing Lanes The New Bike Lanes Present More Problems Than They Solve

A friend, I'll call her Florence, would have represented her country in the 1956 Olympics were it not for the psycho-physical phenomenon known as optical flow. Florence placed out of the money in a qualifier of the women's 100-yard dash on the day of the race. However, a photo in the next day's newspaper clearly showed her breaking the tape ahead of the field. Flo beat out the competition but lost to kinematics: The finish line judge had his eyes fixed on the far outside lane—he did not see Flo blur right past him on the inside.

Optical flow is the way that we perceive speed and distance. It is what makes road signs whiz by, but distant mountains appear relatively static. The determinants of optical flow are distance and angle. Think of the sensation of a road sign 'speeding' up the closer you get to it, until it becomes just a flash in your peripheral vision.

Optical flow is also what makes the new parking-buffered bike lane on Park Avenue an unfortunate failure. ("Parking-buffered" means that the bike lane sits between the parked cars and the curb). Although this style is used widely elsewhere, it is the first one in Maine. The new configuration is at the behest of District Two Councilor Spencer Thibodeau and his \$100,000 allowance from the capital improvement budget.

The problem with the location of the new parking-buffered bike lane is driveways. There are twenty-seven of them on the six block stretch and fourteen in the two blocks from Weymouth Street to Mellen Street. A general criticism of bike lanes is that some can give a false sense of safety; and this is a case in point. Cyclists are lulled into feeling safe, when actually they need to be hyper vigilant of mid-block driveways and the motorists who pull in and out of them. Moreover, motorists may have a hard time seeing cyclists due to optical flow (e.g., looking in the wrong place) as well as the fact that they are hidden behind the parked cars. Worse yet, the parked cars and short buffer zones (to allow for more parking spaces) obstruct the cyclists' vision, obliging riders to continuously swivel their heads between the driveways and the roadway. The lane on the north side (along the park) is quite a bit safer, but it still feels like a solution in search of a problem.

The new design raises other concerns, such as left turns, bus conflicts, and whether snow and debris can be cleared adequately—especially to avoid ice build up over winter.

I and other regular bike commuters rated Park Avenue as a very good bike route before the restriping took place (I've ridden the route hundreds of times). So when the proposal came to the attention of the Portland Bicycle Pedestrian Committee (of which I was Chair at the time) it met with a fair amount of skepticism and debate. Two main concerns were: Why is the lane being put there? And, why not put the \$100,000 to more pressing needs such as another sidewalk snow plow?

Ultimately however, the bike-ped committee did give the project our support on the basis that A) Not everyone feels comfortable riding in traffic and B) The lane can be used as a 'demonstration project' to paint the way toward more innovative bicycle infrastructure. (Proof of concept would be if bicycle ridership increased dramatically along the route.)

On my inaugural ride, I was uncomfortable almost immediately and soon realized that I was constantly having to look both ways as I approached driveway after driveway—which I had never noticed when the bike lane was further out in the roadway. (The parking-buffered lanes that I've ridden elsewhere do not have any driveways.) No sooner did I pull back into the road than someone from a car yelled "get into your lane!"

In fairness, I had not raised the driveway concern when I saw the engineering plans—and I cannot recall any discussion of the impact of so many driveways. However, if I had a redo (like in a year when the paint is worn off), I would recommend that the Southside bike lane be put further out in the roadway as is more conventional.

Maybe that is just part of the learning curve for a project like this, but in retrospect, the city should have left well enough alone. Although, sometimes it is difficult to see what is right in front of your face.

## **E:** Survey results

Park Avenue Bike Lane Survey June 2025.pdf

[Add PBPAC to the beginning of this title or as Hans suggest add it as a second Appendix.]