

Safety Concerns on Great Rd for Bicyclists

To: Selectmen, DPW Director, Town Manager, Police Chief

From: Bedford Bicycle Advisory Committee

Subject: Safety Concerns on Great Rd for Bicyclists

Date: Feb. 22, 2018

Despite excellent guidance from the Town's 2015 Bicycle Master Plan, the Town's pledge to honor its Complete Streets Policy, and recommendations from the Bedford Bicycle Advisory Committee, again, it appears the safety and comfort of bicyclists have been compromised with new changes to Great Rd.



Coming from the Concord side on Great Rd, near Mudge Way intersection, there is the new (eastbound) marked bike lane.

The new bike lanes as well as the intersection redesign were part of the MassDOT funded Safe Routes To School project completed Fall, 2017.

Shortly after the eastbound bike lane starts, the traffic



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lane and the bike lane veer sharply to the left to accommodate the new



ped-crossing bump out and parking lane that begins in front of the Congregational Church.

Because of the speed (posted 30 mph) and sharp lane shift, motor vehicles more frequently than not, 'cut' the lane. Drivers are crossing the double yellow or the bike lane lines (or both!) as they take the shortest path through that lane shift.

After less than a year of use, the bike lane markers (on both sides of the road) are already worn bare in spots, reflecting how often cars drive over them.



When a driver is distracted in the intersection, it is our fear that the vulnerable bicyclist will be hit **even while riding in the bike lane.**

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A better solution would have been to extend the bike lane straight and to the right of the parking lane. This is known as a **‘protected’ or ‘separated’ bike lane**, shown in the Complete Streets Manual, described and recommended in the Town’s Bicycle Master Plan, and endorsed by the Bicycle Advisory Committee.

Below is an example of a protected bike lane next to a lane of parked cars.



The current layout of lanes on Great Rd has many flaws from a safety perspective, but this one could end in a disaster, with high responsibility for the Town of Bedford. Spring is around the corner and more bicyclists than ever will be passing that intersection.

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Additional concerns include the **lack of continuity and clarity** on Great Rd from



Mudge Way to South Rd, and the use of outmoded (Share The Road) signage. The eastbound bike lane (foreground) abruptly ends by fading into a supposed sharrow ('share the road' signage, background). However, the sharrow road marking has been painted into the existing parking lane (right photo) and thus violates sharrow installation guidelines and leaves the bicyclist wondering where to go when parked cars are present.



Then after the new bike lane abruptly ends, 500 ft later, in front of the Fire Station, we encounter the old

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existing bike lane installed as part of the South Rd intersection projection.



Why did the engineers choose to abruptly end the new bike lane, install two new signs (BIKE LANE ENDS; Share The Road), and paint a sharrow, instead of simply joining up with the existing bike lane with a bit of paint for the 500 ft segment?

We recommend meeting with Town Staff to discuss this matter. An earlier email sent (Feb. 6) to the DPW Director by the Chair explained we planned to write a letter detailing our safety concerns and asked if Staff was already aware of the issues and had any plans to address them. As of Feb. 22, there has been no reply. At our monthly meeting (Feb. 7), the Bicycle Advisory Committee unanimously approved sending a letter to the Town with our concerns.

Sincerely,

Bicycle Advisory/Great Rd Bike Lane Subcomm (Jan van Steenwijk, Terry Gleason)