

## Harnish, Sharon L

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**From:** Jim Wilson <jwilson.4289@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, July 18, 2022 4:49 PM  
**To:** Transportation Policy Board  
**Subject:** RE: Speed Policy on Shared Use Path Discussion (72615)

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Dear Transportation Policy and Planning Board,

After reading through the slides, I felt it necessary to share my experience and add my comments.

In brief, I believe the conflicts stem from there not being enough space to comfortably share the paths. I support widening the paths where applicable, adding lanes to paths (e.g. walking only lanes--could include multiple lanes for this--, extra multi-use lanes--think 3 or 4 lane paths--, turn lanes where applicable to allow turning bike traffic to cue without blocking through traffic, etc.), and removing on-street parking from city streets to enable the construction of new bike lanes (protected where possible) to alleviate pressure from the shared-use path network. I also support education where necessary to encourage good path etiquette by all users. I do not support any kind of path speed limits, and I do not support moving faster bicyclists off the paths and onto streets.

For context, I am a long time bike commuter who uses the shared use paths regularly, and I understand from first hand experience the issues primarily being discussed. I have commuted to and from various places in Madison, using nearly every major shared-use path in the process. That would include the Southwest Commuter Path, the Capital City Trail in its entirety, the Marsh View Path, and the Starkweather Creek Path. That would also include commuting through the winter, and on weekends. I have seen crowded paths, I have seen empty paths. I have seen people make some very poor choices when passing. I have had people complain I did not announce a pass, and I have had people complain I announced a pass. Personally, I never pass unless there is a clear oncoming lane, but I have seen people squeeze between oncoming traffic and the slower traffic they're trying to pass. I have also been passed by faster users with only inches to spare, even when there's plenty of room to move over farther. At night, I have had people yell at me for having a light that is too bright, and in the same interaction had a person also tell my riding partner that they did not have a bright enough light.

A lot of the slides around path etiquette stem from what would seem like an obvious conflict. That is, users of different speeds using the same shared use paths and lanes. On our streets and road networks, we recognize the incompatibility of those speed differentials by creating separate spaces for the various speeds of traffic. Namely we have sidewalks for pedestrians, bike lanes--although insufficient for a truly all ages and abilities bike network--do provide a separate space for people riding at bike speed to do so without the added stress of fast motor vehicle traffic directly behind, and finally there are the main vehicle travel lanes, which although legal for people on bikes to use if bike lanes are substandard or are not present or maintained, are primarily used for motor vehicle traffic. On our shared use paths, there is one 5-foot lane in each direction, providing a lane no wider than a typical sidewalk to be shared with pedestrians walking 1-3 mph, and bicyclists riding at 8-15 mph going in the same direction without moving over to the oncoming lane.

The most sensible solution to these conflicts is to provide more space for all users. Chicago has done a great job managing this conflict on their signature Lakeshore Path by providing two full 10 foot wide paths--one for pedestrians, and one for biking. In practice you'll occasionally see a pedestrian using the bike path, and a

bicyclist using the pedestrian path, but providing those separate spaces really helps to alleviate the conflicts between faster moving bicyclists and slower moving pedestrians.

When considering more space for biking and walking, it's important to consider the context of how much space is given over to cars. Not just for driving them, but parking them. We give so much of our public rights of way over to nearly exclusive use by motor vehicles, then we get surprised when there's conflict on the narrow 10 foot corridors we expect everyone else to use. In 2018, Monroe Street business chose to prioritize car parking over the proposed on-street bike lanes that Madison Bikes supported to try and get more space allocated for people on bikes. Part of their argument then was the existence of the nearby Southwest Commuter Path. Now, the Dudgeon Monroe Neighborhood Association wants to take people riding bikes over 15 mph off the very shared-use path they argued was a reason to not build the bike lanes on Monroe Street, and put them on nearby roads instead. That is the wrong approach to solving the conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians on shared use paths. A better approach would be to provide more space to separate the uses, not less.

Finally, introducing lower speed limits to bike paths would unnecessarily burden people using the shared use paths for commuting purposes. If we as a city want to encourage replacing car trips by bike, we cannot unnecessarily burden those people for choosing to go by bike. Most shared-use path users are already speed limited anyways. People on non-electric bikes are limited by their physical fitness, electric bikes are mandated to have a limited assist range less than 20 mph for Class 1, and less than 28 for Class 3. For those reasons I oppose speed limits for shared use paths.

Best,  
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