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From: Jesse Dirkman <jesse.dirkman@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, July 17, 2022 2:29 PM
To: Transportation Policy Board
Subject: Comments on item 4/72615: Speed Policy on Shared Use Paths

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Dear Transportation Policy Board,

Just wanted to submit some comments after reviewing the slides:

I'm a frequent path user, and I use the paths on foot, on e-bike, and on regular bike. I use the paths to commute to work & to run errands throughout the city, as well as for exercise/recreation.

My main takeaway from the feedback is that there are a lot of conflicting opinions, which makes sense - these are shared use paths, and people with very different use cases have very different opinions about who/what kind of uses should be prioritized on such a path. Please continue to prioritize their use as shared-use paths, rather than legislating some groups away from using them. I've had times when I've been annoyed by traffic that is way slower than me/taking up a lot of space, and I've had times when I've been caught off-guard/frightened by someone passing by me more quickly/more closely than felt comfortable. That said, my experiences on the shared-use paths have been overwhelmingly positive, and I'm very happy that they exist in Madison. Though I've had a few experiences that have raised my heart rate, I feel very safe on the paths, and SO much safer than biking on the roads.

A few ideas presented that concern me:

Speed limits - I'm a REALLY slow manual biker, most people pass me, and I still get to 11-12 mph on a good day. 10mph feels prohibitively slow for biking, especially those of us who want to make use of bike infrastructure to replace car trips, not just for recreation. I definitely slow down on days/at times when there is a lot of foot traffic (whether I'm on a regular bike or an e-bike), but I think it makes a lot more sense to change speed based on the conditions of the path than to require folks to bike much slower than necessary in the early morning when they are the only person using the path. 6am on a Monday is a much different path than 11am on Badger football day.

Telling bikers to move to the road - This is scary. I feel SO much safer on the shared use paths and segregated bike lanes than anywhere else. While there may be more conflicts on the shared use paths due to so many different types of users, those conflicts are absolutely less deadly than car vs. bike conflicts.

Speed bumps - I have chronic fatigue/physical limitations, and speed bumps would make walking and manual biking SO much harder for those of us with disabilities. One of the best perks of the paths is how smooth and flat they are; speed bumps would make them really hard on my body.

Different rules for e-bikes - As someone with physical limitations, an e-bike is an amazing and freeing machine. If you do choose to make new rules, please base them on behavior rather than type of machine.

I realize I'm not offering you any solutions here - unfortunately, I don't think there are any easy ones. But I appreciate you taking the time to read my thoughts.

Best,
Jesse Dirkman

