

**Kennett Pike Bikeway Project
Kennett Township, Chester County**

BIKEWAY DESIGN BREAKOUT GROUP - NOTES

The Bikeway Design breakout group consisted of 6 members (including the Group Leader). Generally, the group agreed that the most important characteristics for a successful bikeway are the following:

- Adequate width (at least 5 feet)
- Keeping the bikeway clear of debris, obstructions, and water
- Good signage and striping (especially at intersections)

In addition, the following comments were noted:

1. Bikeway Usage

- Most bicyclists do not ride along the entire stretch of PA52; rather, they enter and exit from side streets along the way.
- The majority of bicycle trips on PA52 are recreational and during daylight hours; riding at night is perceived as dangerous.
- Bicyclists often ride side-by-side so that they can converse while riding.

2. Bikeway Characteristics

- **Width:** PENNDOT's design standards specify a minimum width of 4 feet for a bike lane, but notes that "5 feet or greater widths are preferable and additional widths are desirable where substantial truck traffic is present, or where motor vehicle speeds exceed 50mph."

Given the conditions along PA52, a 5-foot wide bike lane would be adequate, but a wider lane would be desirable to allow bicyclists to ride side-by-side and also to make it easier to avoid obstacles. Extra lane width is important for rollerbladers, especially on inclines, because they need room to slow down. A buffer area between the travel lane and bike lane would be useful as long as it is clearly marked and understood by both vehicles and bicyclists. The group felt that bicyclists, pedestrians, and rollerbladers are generally courteous to each other and could be accommodated in the bike lane without need for separate facilities.

- **Texture:** Although a colored/textured bike lane (or buffer) could be useful in highlighting the presence of a bikeway, there were several concerns including maintenance (how soon will it fade) and slipperiness. It was agreed that extra width and a good base are more important than texture.
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- **Signage/Striping:** The symbols, striping, and signage used to denote a bike lane are very important. In addition to the minimum spacing specified by PENNDOT, the designer should consider adding extra signage/striping at intersections and in other important locations. The designer should ensure that neither existing nor proposed signage protrudes into the bikeway. Also, the designer should check that the paint used for striping is not slippery for bicyclists.
- **Intersections:** Experienced bicyclists typically make left turns onto side streets by checking their mirrors, entering the travel lane, signaling with their hands, and then making the turn “on the fly” without stopping. In contrast, beginner bicyclists may stop in the shoulder, wait for vehicles to cross, and then cross on foot.
- **Lighting:** Group members said that improved lighting is not necessary because riding at night should not be encouraged.

3. Drainage

- The bicycle lanes should be sloped so that they stay clear of debris and water. In effect, they should be “self-cleaning” after a storm.
- The top edge of a drainage swale needs to be flush with the edge of the bike lane so that there isn’t a lip. Drainage swales can serve as a refuge area if a bicyclist needs to swerve out of the lane.
- Bicycle-friendly inlet grates are crucial and should be installed throughout the corridor.
- A solid roadway base under the bike lane is important so that the edge does not deteriorate.

4. Other

- School bus drivers exhibit some of the worst driver behavior and are a concern to bicyclists.
 - Blinking yellow lights could be used to slow traffic in key areas.
 - Parked cars along the bikeway, especially near Mendenhall, would be an obstacle to bicyclists.
 - Some vehicles go into the shoulder to pass turning vehicles on the right, and a wider bike lane may encourage more of this behavior. Good signage and striping along with bicyclist awareness may help to mitigate the impacts of these passes.
 - There were mixed feelings about the railroad tracks at Mendenhall. One group member said that the tracks are not a problem to cross on bicycle, while another felt that they were somewhat difficult to cross.
 - One group member suggested contacting the bicycle advocate at Chester County Planning Commission (Ray Sachs, AICP, 610-344-6285, rsachs@chesco.org).
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