



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF
TRANSPORTATION

Testimony of
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Pennsylvania Department of Transportation
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Good afternoon, Chairman Langerholc, Chairman Flynn, members of the committee and staff. My name is Jennie Louwerse, and I am the Deputy Secretary of Multimodal Transportation for the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before all of you today and discuss House Bill 140.

Pennsylvania is facing many changes that will require our transportation network to be increasingly multimodal, with a strong focus on walking and biking. Pennsylvania's population has changed over time. A recent trend shows a resurgence of population in major cities. For many families with fixed and low incomes, additional safe, low-cost multimodal transportation options can help ensure they remain connected to the people and resources they need. Additionally, some Pennsylvanians may choose to delay or not obtain a driver's license due to personal choices, the costs of owning and operating a motor vehicle, or geographic location. Cycling has become an attractive alternative transportation option.

Cities and states across the United States are installing Parking Separate Bike Lanes (PSBLs) on their street networks as a means of providing dedicated bicycle infrastructure that is accessible to more people. As their name implies, these bike lanes are not directly adjacent to the travel

lanes but are between a row of parking and the curb and/or sidewalk. This separation is intended to provide more protection for the user and by reducing bicycle crash rates.

Currently the use of PSBL in Pennsylvania is limited because of the language in Title 75 which specifically requires vehicles to park within 12 inches of the curb or edge of roadway. The configuration of PSBLs to lie between the curb and the parked vehicles creates a discord with the current requirements of Title 75.

I would like to address the following topics in my testimony today:

- **Design guidance** for parking separated bike lanes
- National and state bike **crash data**
- Philadelphia's current **pilot project**

Design Guidance

PSBLs are in-street bikeways that dedicate a separate and defined space for cyclists that is indicated by striping, markings, signage, vertical elements, and intersection treatments.

(Photographs 1-3). They are typically attractive to all ages and abilities, which may increase cyclist volumes along a corridor due to the comfort and perceived safety of the facility. PSBLs also maintain some parking capacity, which may be valuable to businesses and communities.

Within the Bicycle Chapter of Pub 13 (Design Manual 2), the Department recently added materials related to bicycle lane design, signing, and pavement markings that reflected existing and anticipated additional guidance from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

However, the PSBL facility was excluded due to language in Title 75 that specifically requires vehicles to park within 12 inches of the curb or edge of roadway. The inclusion of PSBLs in DM 2 would increase options and provide for design consistency for communities when they

are planning and designing their transportation network.

Crash Data

PennDOT's 2020 crash data shows that 45 percent of fatal bicycle crashes and 36 percent of bicycle crashes occurred at non-intersection locations. This is consistent with data from the 2019 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration showing that 62 percent of bicyclist fatalities occurred at non-intersection locations. PSBLs would provide physical separation from motor vehicle traffic.

Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Separated Bike Lane Planning and Design Guide (2015) noted that per capita crash rates for cyclists appeared to decrease in most facilities after separated bike lanes were installed. It is also documented that separated bike lanes offer a high level of human error accommodation for people riding bikes and that separated bike lanes may accommodate cyclists of more ages and abilities due to the separation between motor vehicles and bicyclists.

Philadelphia Pilot Program

Within Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, in coordination with PennDOT, developed a pilot study to evaluate the effectiveness of PSBLs beginning in 2018.

As part of this pilot, data was collected for PSBLs installed along Market Street and JFK Boulevard:

- Total crashes decreased between 15 and 37 percent following installation of the PSBLs on these two streets,
- The PSBLs served as a traffic calming treatment with vehicle speeds declining slightly

post-installation (-9% on Market Street and -16% on JFK),

- The overall number of riders increased post-installation—by 100 to 300 percent on some blocks of Market Street—and that those riders strongly preferred the PSBLs.

The City of Philadelphia is supportive of and recommends expanding locations for PSBLs implementation, as appropriate. The Department would like to emphasize the need for a continued pilot from a safety and maintenance perspective, and the identification of municipality maintenance responsibilities (*Photograph 4*).

Conclusion

PSBLs are a nationally recognized non-motorized facility type that has the potential to improve traffic safety for all street users by helping to organize on-street traffic patterns, support local speed reduction efforts, and reduce pedestrian crossing distances at intersections.

As the data from the Philadelphia pilot shows, PSBLs also contribute to increased bicycling volumes and potentially encourage residents to trade trips made by car for trips made by bicycle, in part by appealing to less confident riders with enhanced separation from motor vehicle traffic. This mode shift can help alleviate traffic congestion and contributing to other public policy goals such as improved public health and reduced air pollution.

PennDOT has been actively involved with the outcomes from the pilot locations in the City of Philadelphia. This involvement has identified areas that would need addressed relative to agreements for items including liability, maintenance responsibilities for drainage and snow removal, and roadway maintenance of traffic control devices. Planning and design

considerations from the pilot would also need incorporated into our Design Manuals and publications to provide the necessary guidance on use of PSBLs for the purpose of planning and project delivery processes. As identified, there are still numerous challenges to address related to maintenance and implementation that the Department would need to resolve if the bill were to pass but PennDOT does endorse the passage of HB 140.



Photograph 1: Parkside Avenue, Philadelphia - Improvements include striping, markings, flexible delineators and signage.



Photograph 2: Race Street, Philadelphia - Improvements include flexible delineators, striping, markings, and intersection treatment



Photograph 3: Market Street, Philadelphia - Improvements include bicycle signal, flexible delineator post, painted buffer, and bicycle pavement markings.



Photograph 4: Market Street, Philadelphia – Winter maintenance in Philadelphia. Smaller machinery utilized to minimize damage to delineator posts.