



Benefits of Multi-Use Path Across Little Bay

January 30, 2018

1. The results of the December 2017 SABR survey regarding the Memorial Bridge shuttle service show that a shuttle bus decreased cycling (only 10% of cyclists reported using it) and was considered “not a success” by 81% of the survey respondents. The problems most frequently cited were the shuttle’s inconvenience, unreliability, long wait times, and insufficient room for bicycles.
2. Decisions on how to accommodate non-motorized travelers did have an impact on walking and cycling behaviors. The survey results show that 36% of the respondents stopped walking and cycling during the Memorial Bridge construction. This reverses the numerous health benefits and environmental stewardship resulting from active transportation.
3. The proposed shuttle will likely decrease non-motorized use and will result in additional traffic congestion or non-legal use. The bridge is an important connector for commuters, tourists, and bicycle clubs. Because of the inconvenience of a shuttle, people who bicycled or walked across Little Bay will be encouraged to drive instead, setting back years of bicycle advocacy work meant to ease additional traffic congestion.
4. During the construction of the Memorial Bridge, bicyclists and walkers frustrated by the inconvenience of the shuttle rode or walked across the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, an unintended risk. A similar situation might occur with the Little Bay Bridge.
5. New Hampshire needs to retain and attract millennials (those under 35 years old and the largest segment of the American workforce). They have the lowest rate of driving to work and the highest increase in bicycle commuting. (1). To attract these workers, especially those living in Dover/Durham and working in Portsmouth, there needs to be viable non-motorized access connecting the two cities.
6. Pedal-assist electric bike sales are currently exploding. Pedal-assist bike sales are strong in the Millennial and the Baby Boomer demographics, allowing riders to commute greater distances that were otherwise out of reach of the average rider (2). SABR expects strong increases in commuting by bike, but only if proper infrastructure exists.

As our research has shown, the bike shuttle decreases bicycle commuting behavior by local citizens.

7. Bicycle infrastructure is becoming more important to today's tech corporations, especially those that have a high number of Millennial employees. It is interesting to note that the 20 finalists for Amazon's second headquarters ALL are Bicycle Friendly Cities as designated by the Bicycle League of America. Of Amazon's current Seattle workforce "Fifty-five percent walk, ride bikes or use public transportation." according to the NY Times (3).
8. Motorists using the Little Bay Bridge are accustomed to lane changes, lane closures, and the use of Jersey barriers for the long-term benefit of motorists. Creating a multi-modal lane by using Jersey barriers will not be perceived by motorists as unusual. There is a perception of unfairness if these actions are deemed too costly by NHDOT for the benefit of non-motorized transportation users, but a reasonable cost for motor vehicle operators.
9. The current plan to use a shuttle bus has potential American with Disabilities Act issue. The law requires reasonable modifications and accommodations to avoid discrimination. The General Sullivan bridge is used by riders on hand cycles, tandems, triplets, and modified bicycles that would not be accommodated in the current plan (using a van/bus for transport) but would be accommodated by a bike lane.
10. University of New Hampshire's Durham campus is 4.5 miles away from the General Sullivan Bridge. The campus has numerous users who bicycle on adaptive cycles as part of the Northeast Passage educational or rental programs.
11. The Gen. Sullivan Bridge is used by bicyclists in the winter. Given the low temperatures and wind chill factor common in New Hampshire, cyclists risk hypothermia as they cool down from a sweat while waiting for a bus. This is a strong deterrent from riding in cold weather.
12. A multi-use path has a zero-carbon footprint. In the May 2017 Commute Smart B2B Challenge, hundreds of bicyclists and walkers rode 15,000 miles (2,566 trips), which reduced their carbon footprint in the Seacoast by 5.9 tons.
13. A bus shuttle can only accommodate one type of bicycle. It would not accommodate cargo bikes, recumbent bicycles, tandem bicycles, triplet bicycles, hand cycles, velomobiles, electric bikes, bikes with trailers, etc. These types of cycles are used by people for an assortment of reasons (physical disabilities, transporting children, transporting cargo, medical conditions, personal preference).

14. The Memorial Bridge shuttle could only accommodate four bicycles per trip which was one of the major reasons it was not used. It is not uncommon for groups of 20-30 cyclists to arrive at the bridge at one time during a group ride. How could a shuttle service accommodate the 500-1000 bikers and pedestrians who use the Gen. Sullivan bridge on a weekly basis, especially during rush hour? Under the current proposal if the shuttle operated once an hour for 16 hours a day, with four single bikes accommodated by van, then it is possible for 52 cyclists to cross the bridge a day. If you multiply by seven days only 364 cyclists could be accommodated per week under perfect use. Perfect use assumes cyclists arrive at the van shuttle in groups of four for every hour of shuttle service operation for a week.
15. A person who arrives at the bridge non-motorized and is unable to cross the bridge would have a choice of a 28.7 mile detour to the north, or a 30 mile detour by following around Great Bay to the south. This is the equivalent of asking a car to detour over 100 miles.
16. Bicycle riders and pedestrians cause negligible wear to roadways and bridges when compared to much heavier four-wheeled motor vehicles. Multi-modal users pay taxes, must pay for parking lots, highways, DOT projects through their taxes like other citizens, but receive less benefit. The disparity is most apparent in this current project.

1. *American Commuter Survey*, U.S. Census, 2013
2. "Electric bikes are exploding right now because they have no age associations, offer an authentic riding experience, and appeal to the two strongest purchasing generations in the U.S. – Boomers and Millennials," said Matt Powell, vice president and sports industry analyst, The NPD Group. "Being experiential yet non-arduous they draw Boomers, while Millennials enjoy that they are technological, experiential, and offer a more economical way of getting around." Source: The NPD Group, Inc. / Retail Tracking Service, 12 months ending July 2017
3. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/business/amazon-headquarters-competition.html>