

Gadfly goes to the primary sources –the bridges!

The Bethlehem Gadfly Pedestrian bridge November 17, 2020

 *Latest in a series of posts on the pedestrian bridge* 

City Council votes on providing funds for a feasibility study of a pedestrian/biking bridge tonight. Gadfly encourages you to back this study before Council votes by emailing Council members before 4PM today (Clerks@bethlehem-pa.gov) and/or by calling in to the meeting during public comment (see instructions [here](#)).

Gadfly is sorry that he ran out of time and couldn't visit the Minsi Trail bridge today.

Councilman Callahan has argued against the bridge study because he has video of our three bridges showing considerable already available and hardly used walking/riding space.

Gadfly doesn't think Councilman Callahan is at all envisioning the kind of goals or the increased "traffic" the bridge advocates have in mind.

The decision tonight should not be based on current body counts or strictly utilitarian criteria.

So Gadfly went to the primary sources.

And herewith his thoughts on the Fahy and Hill to Hill bridges as shared pedestrian/bike paths:

- bikes are supposed to ride in the road not on sidewalks

- the proposed pedestrian/bike bridge would have a variety of uses, not just as a utilitarian conveyance of bodies
- bikes and pedestrians are not a good mix unless there is adequate width space
- the width size of a pedestrian/bike bridge might be governed by state, federal, or professional organization standards
- Gadfly's rough research indicates a shared pathway should be at least 10ft wide
- the pathways on the Fahy and Hill to Hill bridges are 6ft wide
- the Fahy bridge loses 15inches of width five or six times because of the bump-ins for lighting
- the Hill to Hill bridge narrows at the trestle
- Gadfly is 24inches wide elbow-to-elbow in brisk walking stride
- Gadfly's bike is 25inches across the handlebars
- both bridges have hard "walls" on both sides
- two walkers can barely pass side-by-side
- a moving bike passing a walker is a delicate passage
- the margin for error when a moving bike passes a pedestrian is slim
- here are typical walkers on the Fahy bridge — taking up a lot of space
- imagine a moving bike getting by





Because of the recreational and social goals of the proposed bridge by the advocates, one should also factor aesthetics into the funding decision.

Because the pathways on the Fahy and Hill to Hill bridges are so close to the roadways, it would not be an understatement to say that there is no aesthetic dimension to either bridge for walkers or riders.

The trip across can be sensorily devastating.

Listen.

The difference between a suggested 10ft+ width for paths shared by bikers and pedestrians and the 6ft widths of the Fahy and Hill to Hill bridges can be seen in these comparison photos of the Fahy with Jim Thorpe's Mansion Bridge.





Supporting the study:

ref: **Interviews with design firms yield new insights into the utility and value of a pedestrian/biking bridge across the Lehigh**

ref: **Add your name to the many organizations endorsing the pedestrian/biking bridge feasibility study**

ref: **A pedestrian/biking bridge: “The possible is a big deal”**

ref: **Gadfly “talks” bridges with Councilman Callahan**

ref: **One cyclist hurt, one killed**

ref: **Act Now!**

ref: **Jim Thorpe’s Mansion Bridge**

Against public funding:

ref: **Let’s fund the study and the bridge privately**

Against the study:

ref: **A better use for the pedestrian/bike bridge money?**

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