

There was a recent altercation on Long Hollow Pike near Beech High involving a cyclist and a motorist during which the cyclist received major facial injuries. Although justice was served, it would be far better if the event had not occurred at all.

The motorist was arrested and sentenced to jail time plus some monetary fines. One might expect the routinely harassed cycling community to rejoice over a motorist actually getting punished. This is not the case. The motorist was foolish enough to exit his vehicle and assault the cyclist in front of numerous impartial witnesses. It was obvious the assailant never felt threatened by the cyclist. This was a simple case of assault and battery. The sentence does nothing to make cyclists feel safer. To the contrary, the event lends support to those who argue that cyclists should not be on public roads at all. The involved cyclist will no longer cycle alone. The motorist, his friends, and his family are no doubt less favorably disposed toward cyclists than before. Cyclists would feel safer and motorists will become more tolerant if they can peacefully coexist on the same roads.

The incident started with the cyclist riding Long Hollow Pike on the white line between the right vehicular lane and a very adequate shoulder marked a bike route. The motorist expected the cyclist to be in the marked bike lane and so advised the cyclist. Much of the shoulder between Goodlettsville and Gallatin is so littered that it is unsafe for cyclists but that is not obvious to noncyclists. When the cyclist declined to move over, the motorist pulled over in front of the cyclist blocking the lane with an ensuing physical altercation reportedly initiated by the motorist.



*Illustration 1: Debris along Long Hollow Pike.*



*Illustration 2: Result of trying to stay in cycle lane is a punctured tube.*



*Illustration 3: Here gravel so deep as to make staying upright on bike difficult. Note overtaking car must get into oncoming lane to comfortably pass cyclist.*



*Illustration 4: Approach to bridge over Station Camp Creek. No shoulder over bridge.*

There are construction sites and a few narrow spots where there is no shoulder at all. Most of the debris and lane blockages are due to construction except for the bridge over Station Camp Creek . We may expect construction along most of the roads in this region for years to come. We need some method of routine maintenance so debris can be removed regularly and construction sites are not free to block the lanes without providing some measure for safe passage for cyclists.

TDOT has an excellent Bicycle pedestrian section of their Long Range Plan, PlanGo that addresses this very issue. Please refer to pages 6-9, 7-10 and 7-11.

<http://www.tdot.state.tn.us/plango/pdfs/plan/BicyclePed.pdf>

At the very least we need to establish a means of providing contacts for corrective action for unsafe conditions.



*Illustration 5: Close up of bridge across Station Camp Creek.*



*Illustration 6: Section of New Shackle Island Road/258 where nature is reclaiming shoulder.*

Illustration 6 is a slightly different but related issue of mother nature reclaiming the roadside. Along 258/New Shackle Island road the shoulder is so narrow that traffic usually keeps it swept of debris but as grass regrows the road edges deteriorate and cyclists are again forced back onto the vehicular lanes. Routine scraping and occasional patching needs to be done

Long Hollow Pike, Gallatin Road, and New Shackle Island Road are all major and in some situations, the only connectors for road cyclists. Their current basic structures are adequate for experienced cyclists but the lack of maintenance and frequent abrupt lane closures make them much more dangerous and create conflict with automobiles. Tennessee law gives cyclists full rights to these roads which implies a legal responsibility to keep them safe. Since no new construction is needed and the equipment is readily available to correct most of the problems, corrective action should be swift. Please give this matter your immediate attention.

Solutions:

- I. Immediately sweep Long Hollow Pike from Center Point Road to the 109 Bypass in Gallatin.
- II. Scrape and repair New Shackle Island/258 from US31E/East Main to Long Hollow pike.
- III. Establish monthly sweeping schedule for the above portion of Long Hollow Pike and US 31E/Gallatin Road from Center Point Road to the 109 Bypass in Gallatin
- IV. Provide a reliable point of contact for the reporting of dangerous road conditions.
- V. Post "Road Narrows" and "Share the Road" signs on the approach to the bridge over Station Camp Creek on Long Hollow Pike.