Bike lanes coming to Harrisburg

When Pottstown installed back-in angle parking on High Street in 2003, it was the first Pennsylvania municipality to do so. Others followed.

Last spring, Pottstown became only the third municipality outside Philadelphia and Pittsburgh to install protected bike lanes, along Jackson and Roland streets.

Now Harrisburg is joining the ranks of cities with protected bike lanes. State Street, the major entryway into Harrisburg from the east, will get them on a mile-long stretch starting in March.

Just as on High Street, Harrisburg plans to make room for the bike lanes by going from two car lanes in each direction to just one.

The lanes are expected to slow down commuter traffic in and out of the city, which is just what city engineers want. A study showed 60 percent of drivers exceed the speed limit. Four pedestrians and a bicyclist have been killed along the street in the last two years.

Last year, Montgomery County, which has 19 miles of bike lanes, approved a plan to eventually install 583 miles of bike lanes on PennDOT roads.

“We’re still a car-oriented culture and a car-oriented county, but things are changing,” said Matthew Edmond, the head of transportation planning for the county.

Pottstown is helping lead the way.

Commentary by Thomas Hylton

HOUSE SALE PRICE TOPS INFLATION— This house at 65 N. Roland went on sale just as two-way bike lanes were being installed in front of it last spring. The lanes didn’t seem to negatively impact the sale price. The house was purchased in June 2011 for $165,000 and sold in September 2018 for $195,000 — about 30 percent above the rate of inflation.