

WALK BIKE RUN WALK BIKE RUN

MATTAPOISETT

Municipal Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan



Village Roads & Sidewalks



Route 6



Roadside Paths



Bike Path



Trails



Minor and Major "Collector" Roads

Prologue

The past 20 years of research demonstrates without doubt that walking and cycling activities - including variants such as wheelchair transport - substantially benefit individuals and communities in terms of basic mobility, affordable transport, improved economics, better health, physical fitness and recreation opportunity.¹ Bicycling in particular "is one of the most economical, sustainable, environmentally friendly and healthiest forms of transportation, which yields negligible emissions, negligible operating costs and extensive health benefits."²

Across our state and nation, however, many people and communities don't walk and bike much for as a regular daily activity and therefore they don't reap all the benefits. This is partly because the conditions on the public ways are not conducive to biking and walking. In fact, in "survey after survey the main reason people don't [bike and walk more] is that they are afraid of being on the road with cars."³

While separated facilities (bike lanes, sidewalks and bike paths) play an important part in reducing barriers to more biking and walking, research shows that the higher numbers of people on bikes or foot sharing the road reduces accident rates. The more bikers and walkers there are, the more car drivers become accustomed to them, and the more likely motorists are to drive in an accommodating manner.⁴

These findings are important to Mattapoisett because the geography of our town and character of our roads makes separated facilities in desired locations difficult to implement. To have more and better biking and walking in our community, our plan must combine public awareness campaigns with infrastructure improvements.

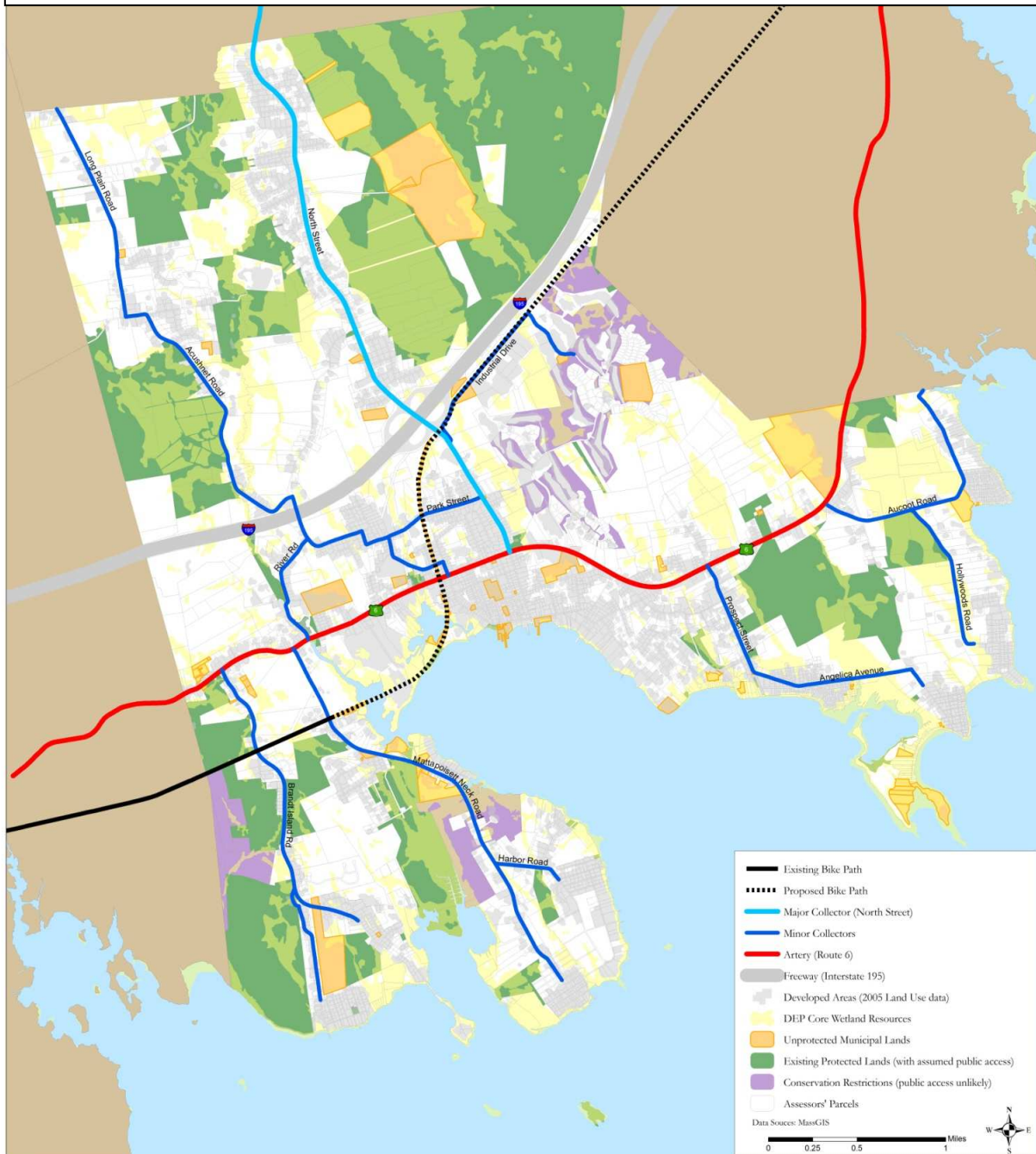
1 Todd Littman *Evaluating Active Transport Benefits and Costs* December 10, 2015

2 SRPEDD *Regional Bicycle Plan* 2015

3 Steve Miller *Steve Miller's Livable Streets Blog* September 09, 2009

4 Ibid

Figure 1: Map of proposed multi-use path, existing regional interstate and arteries, collector roads and conservation lands in Mattapoisett



"..our rural road system has a very limited "network." Rather, our system looks more like a spine (Route 6) with spur roads heading off to the North to wrap around extensive wetlands or off to the South and East over "fingers" of uplands closer to the coast."

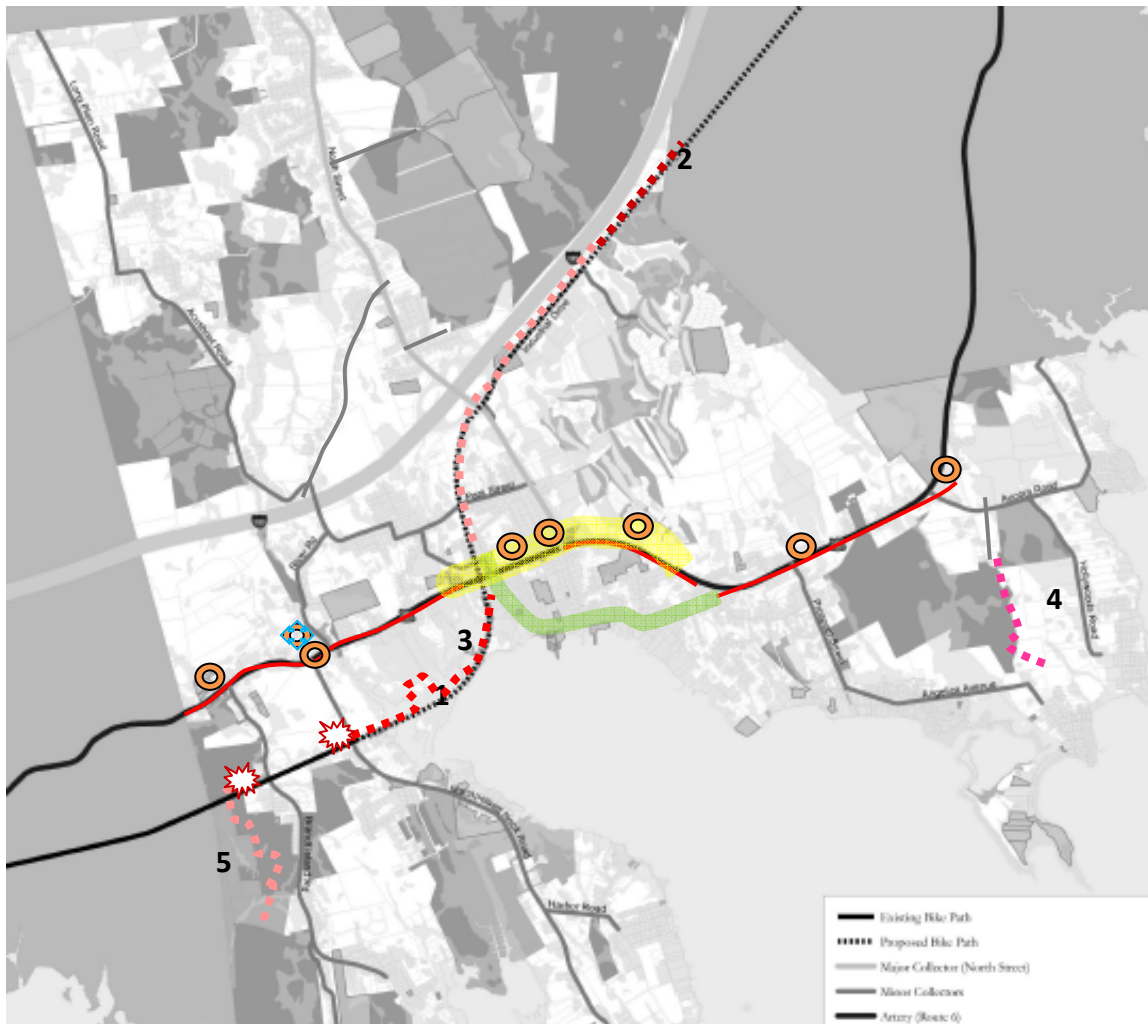
Biking and Walking on Roads and Sidewalks in Mattapoisett

- The 2015 Mattapoisett Bike Walk Run Survey reaffirms research findings across the country: A high proportion of Mattapoisett's bicyclists and walkers don't feel safe walking riding on roads with cars. This is especially true at our "collector roads" (highlighted in blue in figure 1)
- The vast majority of roads in Mattapoisett have no sidewalks and the 2015 MassDOT inventory of streets indicates very few roads or segments of roads in our town are wide enough for separated facilities like bike lanes.
- Thus Mattapoisett is, by default, a "Share the Road" town. Happily, in Mattapoisett most roads have low traffic volumes and speeds of less than 25 miles an hour. In general it appears most walkers and bike riders are comfortable sharing our lowest traffic roads. The problem is that to reach popular destinations from these residential roads, people must move onto the higher volume / higher speed roads they fear.
- For residents interested in improved bicycling and walking, priorities are
 - a) completing the multiuse path,
 - b) traffic calming in select locations on collector roads
 - c) improved Route 6 pedestrian conditions, especially crosswalks.
- Completing the multi-use path to the Village, to the North Street Park and Ride, and to Marion town line will encourage more active transportation for two reasons
 - 1) car-free biking and walking will be more convenient for a significant number of residents
 - 2) neighborhoods will be connected to each other by an alternative route to Route 6.
- With expansion of the path comes greater convenience for using it and avoidance of Route 6. With the expansion more riders and walkers will use a segment of the bike path to reach other destinations also within reach of the path by lower traffic roads. With increased road sharing, motorist accommodation of bikers and walkers will likely improve on collector roads and then, especially if improved conditions on Route 6 are also pursued, residents and businesses will reap the benefits of a more bikable and walkable community.

Accessibility on Mattapoisett Public Ways

In Mattapoisett people with mobility impairments confront worse problems than bikers and walkers face. People in wheelchairs (motorized or not) are less visible on our road; wheel chairs are wider and occupy more of the lane and they are less maneuverable. Also people with mobility impairments typically have less ability to avert collisions or avoid surface imperfections. Finally poor road or sidewalk conditions and lack of curb cuts or a discontinuous sidewalk route can make an outing particularly frustrating. For our aging and less mobile population, uneven surfaces, discontinuous sidewalks and unplowed winter-time sidewalks pose high hazards and discourage walking.

Priority Infrastructure improvements for connectivity



1,2,3 Priorities for completion of Mattapoisett Rail Trail





4 New Multi use path on Old Slough Road connecting Point Connet to Bowman Road.




5 Upgrade existing walking path to a multi-use path




 New pedestrian activated cross walks or other traffic calming

 Traffic calming, at multi use path intersections

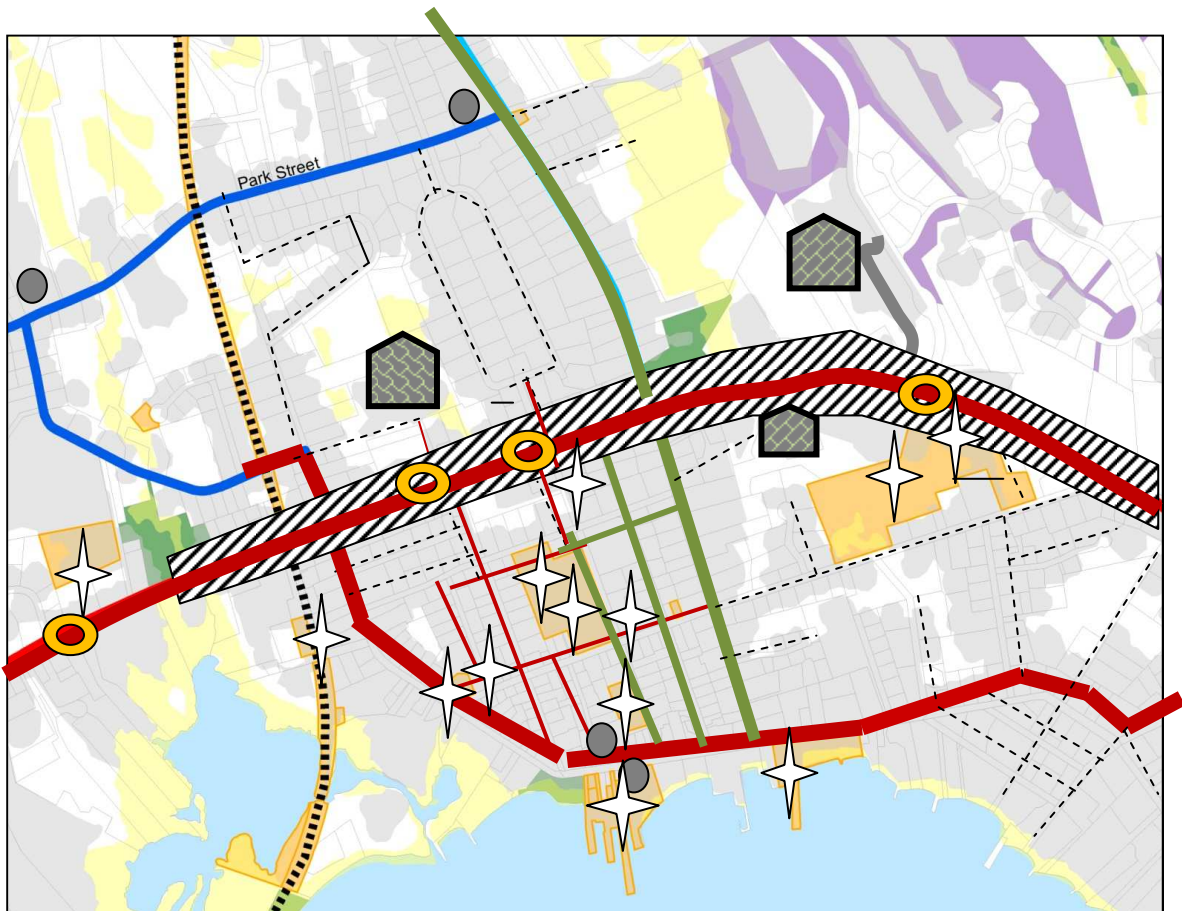
 Sidewalk on South Side of Route 6






 Sidewalks, curb cuts, lane diets, and pedestrian islands at Business District

 Reconstruction of roads and sidewalk on Main St, Water St Beacon St and Marion Road

 Curb improvements at River Road at intersection with Route 6 at commercial parking lot.

Village and Central Business District Priority Improvements



- Existing sidewalk. Improvements and/or continuity needed
- Existing Sidewalk. Improvements completed since 2005
- Local low volume, low speed roads no sidewalk
-  Central Business District  Other Business
-  Popular destinations (Parks, Town Hall, Schools, Council on Aging, Churches, Post Office)
-  Residential development
- Proposed multi-use path connects neighborhoods to business district
-  Proposed pedestrian activated cross walks or other traffic calming

Trail Networks

Mapping of trail networks and providing parking and signage at trail heads was a topic that was engaged by the public at the 2014 Open Space Public Input Meeting. Since 2000 significant acreage has been added to conservation areas owned by the Mattapoisett Land Trust, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay, and the Town of Mattapoisett. Of the publically accessible properties added to the inventory, only property owned by the Town is not mapped for the public's walking enjoyment. In outlying neighborhoods where many residents consider walking along roadway shoulders hazardous, mapped trail networks - especially networks that create walking loops across neighborhoods - could be a viable alternative to sidewalks.

Traffic Calming, Safety and Enforcement

Until certain state and federal highway safety regulations are changed it is unlikely that posted vehicular speed limits can be reduced as many Mattapoisett residents request. But even if reduced speed limits were instituted, it isn't possible or cost effective to ensure that every driver obeys every rule. Pedestrian activated crosswalks, radar speed feedback, lane narrowing and signage are among many traffic calming strategies. Any traffic calming measure must conform to published guidelines or be analyzed, reviewed and approved by the appropriate public safety agent, who can be a local safety officer or a certified traffic engineer.

Safety for bicyclists and walkers in our public ways is primarily a matter of attention, education and cooperation among vehicle drivers, walkers and bicyclists. There is no substitute for being alert, understanding the vulnerability of all road users, nor for knowing and following the rules of the road. While speed is frequently a factor in collisions and crashes, poor judgment and inattention to the conditions on the road also plays a part. When all users sharing the road behave in predictable patterns (promoted by Massachusetts General Laws) crashes and "near misses" are reduced. Awareness programs, plus properly designed and placed signage and road crossing infrastructure have proven the most effective means of promoting cooperation across the state and nation.

Reporting Bicycle and Pedestrian Crashes and Conditions

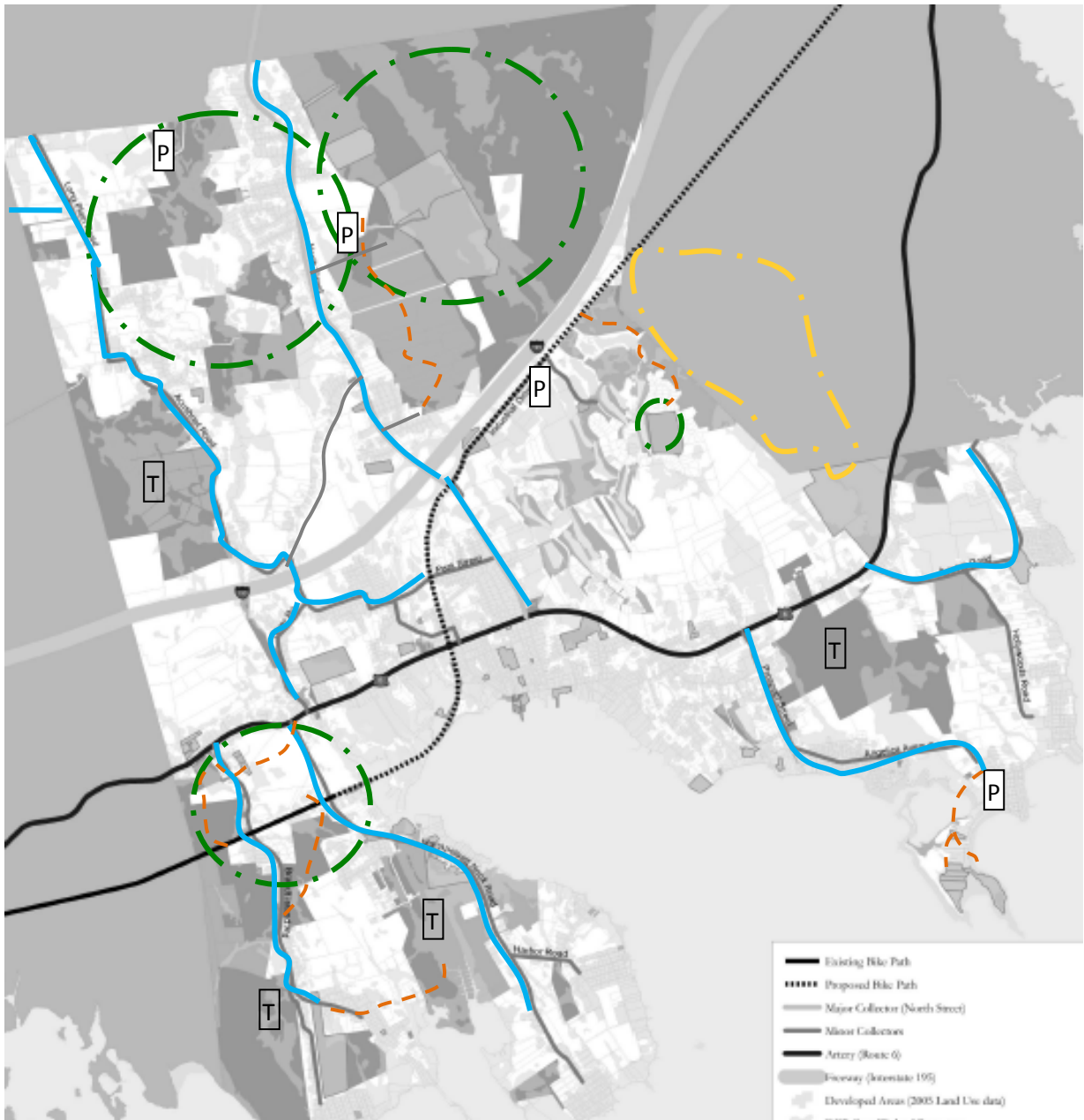
Residents and visitors are encouraged to report collisions, crashes, near misses and hazardous conditions. Our public safety officials need data to evaluate hazards and effect change where needed.

Road hazards: mattapoisethighwaydepartment@comcast.net

Accidents & near misses:

<https://mypolicedepartment.org/mattapoisett-police-department/tipform/>

Trail Expansion and Traffic Calming in Outlying Neighborhoods



Map and mark walking trails in these areas. Provide trail head parking

Consider new trails (easements may be required) to create public walking loops

P New trail head parking T Existing trails and parking

Explore and implement traffic calming, and roadside path feasibility per neighborhood initiative

Cooperative work with Marion for improved bike /pedestrian access to ORR

Awareness campaigns and programs to increase biking and walking

In a "Share the Road town" where increased biking and walking can improve safety, actually getting more "vulnerable road users" to bike and walk means boosting their confidence in their ability to be safe while on the road. Traffic calming, effective cycling classes and share the road campaigns work towards this goal. Learning to ride a bike well, to evaluate conditions and to look for and choose the safest routes is a matter of both education and practice. Parents are generally the people who teach their children safe biking and walking skills, but the Town can help. Awareness campaigns can be undertaken within neighborhoods and can include signage to encourage slower vehicle speeds while advertising the presence of bikers and walkers.

Mattapoisett Police Department participates in safety programs sponsored by the town's schools and maintains safety information on their website. To supplement this there are numerous classes, videos and web-based materials offered by responsible organizations such as MassBike or the League of American Bicyclists that residents can easily access. Inexperienced bike riders should practice under the watchful eye of experienced bicyclists away from heavy traffic until they are competent and well practiced. Group instruction and group riding programs have been found to be most effective when implemented together.

Massachusetts Department of Transportation will help residents increase awareness and start riding and walking more through programs like Safe Routes to School and Bike to Work Week. The South Coast Summer Bike Challenge sponsored by South Coast Bikeway Alliance and the "beginner rides" sponsored by Narragansett Bay Wheelmen are among the encouragement and awareness programs that people can join right now. A walking group regularly walks from the Council on Aging.

Mattapoisett has several resources for working towards the goal of increasing confidence and competence of bikers and walkers. Events, Classes, regular riding and walking groups could be offered on a regular basis through Town Departments. Coordinating such activities with neighboring towns may ensure several convenient dates/times are available to participants.

- Recreation Committee
- Council on Aging
- Library
- School
- Police Department

Non Profit resources

- MassBike
- League of American Bicyclists
- Narragansett Bay Wheelmen
- South Coast Bikeway Alliance
- Friends of Mattapoisett Bicycle and Recreational Path
- Mattapoisett Land Trust

Priorities

HIGH COST	MODERATE COST	LOWER COST	LONG RANGE
Completion of Mattapoisett Rail Trail	Minimize the curb cut on River Road at intersection with Route 6 to properly control approach angles to the parking lot entrance	Radar Speed feedback at select locations.	Improvements to Route 6 especially Route 6 Business District
New multi-use path on Old Slough Road connecting Point Connet to Bowman Road.	New pedestrian-activated cross walks on Route 6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business district • At/near all Collector road intersections 	Other traffic calming (TBD with neighborhood input) on collector roads	
Upgrade existing walking path from Rail Trail (at Fairhaven Town line) to Nasketucket Reservation	Traffic calming at multi use path intersections*	Awareness and Safety Programs	
Reconstruction of roads and sidewalk on Main St, Water St Beacon St and Marion Road	Develop new walking trails to create walking loops across neighborhoods and alternate walking routes to collector roads	Mark and map existing walking trails Identify trail head parking locations	

Recommendations

Fourteen recommendations in five areas of improvements listed below may guide implementation once priorities for the towns biking and walking plan are formalized.

ACTION PLANS

1. Assign a committee, board, department or individual responsibility for priority list items. For each item:
 - a. develop an action plan
 - b. follow up by convening all responsible parties at a Select Board meeting or other public venue
 - c. implement action plans selectively within the comprehensive vision.
 - d. once a year to report to the Town on progress to these goals.
2. For complicated projects retain professional project management to assist the Town in establishing, funding and maintaining realistic budgets and schedules.
3. Continue the current plan to upgrade existing sidewalks in the Village and to construct new sidewalks where they do not exist so that a continuous separated walking zone exists between popular destinations along frequented routes.

IDENTIFY APPROPRIATE FUNDING STRATEGIES

4. Notify MassDOT at the earliest date possible when a Complete Streets Policy has been approved in order that Mattapoisett be eligible for maximum state funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure.
5. Initiate joint discussions with the Capital Planning, Highway Department and Finance Committees about the options for funding different priority items established in the priorities section of this report.

BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

6. Develop programs within the Recreation Department, School Department and Police Department that will help residents overcome obstacles to more frequent biking and walking and establish healthy and safe habits of active transportation and recreation. Enlist schools and parents in developing a "Safe Routes to School" program.
7. Develop programs within neighborhoods that will help those neighborhoods define desired traffic calming measures and or address excessive speeds and hazardous conditions on local roads.
8. Consider establishing "no bike" zones for sidewalks in congested areas of town. bicyclists would be required to dismount and walk on the sidewalk or ride their bikes in the street in these zones.

COORDINATE EFFORTS

9. Meet with business leaders and property owners about 1) opportunities for improved pedestrian and biking experience in the Business District of Route 6 and 2) preparing for future State-funded reconstruction of this facility
10. Work with the region's planning and transportation agencies to improve awareness of opportunities to combine bike trips with public transportation and/or ride sharing.
11. Work with neighboring communities to promote "bike friendly" routes to popular destinations across borders or bike friendly recreational loops
12. Develop public awareness programs within the Highway and Police Departments for reporting
 - a. road hazards
 - b. bicycle or pedestrian collisions/accidents
 - c. near missesUse the local cable TV and Town Hall email programs to advertise how and where to report

MONITOR IMPROVEMENTS

13. Upon Implementing pedestrian activated crosswalks in the Village Business District, or any other traffic calming infrastructure, monitor their success and report back to the Town and MassDOT for the advisability of using these devices in other locations.
14. Conduct bike and pedestrian counts to monitor the increase or decrease in bicycle and pedestrian activity as a result of improvements implemented.