

# Falmouth Bikeways Committee

## ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2014

The mission of the Falmouth Bikeways Committee, as established by Town Meeting in 1975, is to develop, maintain, and improve bikeways in Falmouth, including the promotion of bicycling for transportation and spreading understanding of realistic safety for bicyclists on our road network.

Bicyclists of every type are attracted to our town for a variety of reasons. Many have noted that Trip Advisor, a highly respected travel website, lists the Shining Sea Bikeway as Falmouth's number 1 attraction, above the beaches and other scenery, and they come to Falmouth expecting to have an untroubled ride on a beautiful path with verdant woods and serene seascapes. Others come to work and learn in the prestigious research and academic institutions our town.

Nationally, increasing numbers of people expect to be able to use bikes as transportation to work and play; there is something wonderfully free and pleasing about being able to move about a town on one's own power, at speeds that bring close contact with the faces of people, not the rear bumpers of motor vehicles, and those who experience this pleasure often expect to continue traveling in this manner while enjoying a vacation, exploring one's hometown, or commuting to work. For these reasons the Bikeways Committee is convinced that a positive, welcoming environment for bicycling is an asset Falmouth can be persuaded to offer; it takes nothing away, and gives a great deal back.

The Bikeways Committee met in all but one month and achieved a quorum at 10 of these 11 meetings. At the end of the year the Chairman, Dr. Ed Gross, was retired from the committee by term limits, having served three 3-year terms on the Committee and 6 years as Chairman.

**Committee Membership:** Our membership is set, by charter and amendments, at 9 appointed members. Our membership was full most of the year. A 10<sup>th</sup> member was inadvertently appointed by the Selectmen as a result of confusion regarding the service of a sitting member. This person could not be seated, on advice of Town Counsel, but attended several meetings. As of the end of the fiscal year the committee was at full strength.

Notable achievements included:

- Completion and opening of the long-sought KLB Connector, a path along the edge of the Steamship Authority's Palmer Avenue lot. This path connects the Shining Sea Bikeway to Katharine Lee Bates Road and thus provides a simple, separated and scenic access to Falmouth Village municipal and business locations, including the Public Library, Mullen-Hall and Lawrence Schools, Main Post Office, Town Hall, and the businesses of Main Street. Before this connector came on line, the route from Bikeway to Village was complicated and involved travel along a busy state highway; it was a well-worn joke that people got lost trying to find the Bikeway from Main Street, though the distance is very short.
- Detailed research and planning for an East-West path to connect Teaticket and East Falmouth to Trotting Park Fields area, making it ultimately possible to connect the Shining Sea Bikeway to these communities without requiring travel along Teaticket Highway. Town-owned land was determined to exist allowing such a connection and we are hopeful that we will see this path available in the near future.

- Continued and expanded use of shared-use markings, “Sharrows,” along routes currently used or encouraged for use by cyclists.
- Successful Bike-to-Work Day in May at which we registered many bicyclists who regularly commute by bike to work or school
- Renewed efforts towards creating a park at the corner of Ter Heun Drive and Palmer Avenue, a project variously known as Falmouth Gateway Park and Falmouth Bike Park. The project was dormant for some time because it lacked a local champion; Bikeways had come to be the sole Town sponsor after the resignation of Brian Dale, who originally proposed the project to the Bikeways Committee. An Eagle Scout, Ryson Phares, took the project on as a Scouting project and has been pushing forward towards completion of at least a major portion of the plan as designed by Stephen Stimson, landscape architect.

#### A few incomplete tasks:

- Bikeway blacktop is increasingly damaged by invasive plants; possibly a safety problem, and leading to more difficult future repair.
  - Patching helpful but a pro-active approach would be far better
  - Root barrier and repaving clearly needed in some portions
  - Patching impractical in some locations
  - A grant was awarded to the Town after the close of the year that will enable much of the needed repair.
- Bike racks have been remained insufficient for needs in several locations
  - Woods Hole: Steamship Authority plans for a new terminal include substantial bicycle parking. This should help considerably.
  - CPC funds have become available and the prospects for improvement of the parking shortage are good.
- A Bicycle Transportation Plan is to be developed in FY 2015, with assistance from Cape Cod Commission planners. The plan will then be submitted for Town governmental approval and adoption.
  - Designated safe routes to all schools, especially high and middle schools
  - Plan and implement a safe connection between Shining Sea Bikeway and Goodwill Park
  - Complete planning and construction of a bicycle route corridor connecting East Falmouth and Teaticket to Falmouth High School and Falmouth Village
  - Plan and implement Bike lanes on roads meeting criteria

#### Future directions:

- Once again attempt to achieve designation as a Bicycle Friendly Community
- Establish liaison with Planning Board for suitable projects
- Continue work with the business community to enhance business-oriented bicycling and mutual support.
- We will continue to put our greatest effort into making Falmouth safe – and welcoming – for bicycling as transportation. We believe this is in the best interest of the Town and its guests. No one should be frightened to ride on our streets.
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- Prepared by Edward S. Gross MD, Chairman Emeritus
- Submitted October 23, 2014