

Falmouth Bikeways Committee

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2016

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 safe and healthy transportation by bicycle on our road network.

The Committee is proud to report the conclusion of the development of a Bicycle Transportation Plan with assistance from Cape Cod Commission transportation planners, community feedback at open forums and the Plan's general adoption by the Town with unanimous support of the Board of Selectmen on April 11, 2016.

Here are the vision and goals in the Plan for the Year 2020:

Falmouth is a great place to both live and to visit because its bike-friendly culture and infrastructure yield calm roads, clean air, and a healthy populace in a vibrant, sustainable economy.

Goals:

- To engineer the infrastructure of Falmouth to support bicycling for transport and recreation. A system of well-marked, safe roads and paths make it an attractive place for children and adults to bicycle to their daily destinations. When cyclists arrive at their destinations there are secure facilities to park their bicycles.
- To promote educational and bicycling programs that support public health and tourism, and that reduce air pollution, traffic and parking problems. Bicycling is an integral and appreciated part of the community culture.
- To foster safe, informed, and respectful interactions among people who walk, drive bicycles and cars on Falmouth's roads and paths. Drivers and cyclists understand their respective responsibilities, and police support both through enforcement and education.

The complete Town of Falmouth Plan for an Improved Transportation Network for Bicycling, which includes 25 recommendations for improvements, their budgetary requirements, and an implementation plan, is available on the Town website:

http://www.falmouthmass.us/bike/2015_fal_bikeplanning.pdf

The Town Department of Public Works (DPW) completed a high priority project in coordination with Massachusetts Department of Transportation, namely the installation of warning lights at the Locust St. crossing of the Shining Sea Bikeway (SSBW). Other infrastructure improvements lead by the DPW included the installation of street signs at street crossing along the SSBW. When an old elm tree near Depot Ave. threatened to fall and close the SSBW, DPW implemented a creative solution to direct traffic through the bus depot and around the problem. The DPW has been very responsive and helpful in installing a public bicycle repair station (purchased by the Committee) at the Depot Ave. parking lot, and erecting directional signage there. Next to the northern terminus of the SSBW DPW installed a new kiosk that was built by students at Lawrence School thanks to the help of teacher Bob Porto, and with materials purchased by the Friends of Falmouth Bikeways. Thanks to the Friends of the Falmouth Bikeways for providing such invaluable material support to the SSBW and the Committee's work. The Bikeways Committee would particularly like to thank Town Engineer and now

Assistant Director, Peter McConarty, and new Highway Superintendent, Jim Grady, and their staff for excellent coordination on bikeway maintenance and improvements.

Where root bumps created a safety hazard on a deteriorating section of the SSBW, the DPW shaved them down and re-paved sections between Locust St. and Elm Rd. Root bump safety hazards are growing at an alarming rate on multiple sections of both the old and recently extended SSBW. The Town Planning Department engaged an engineering firm to study this problem among others in preparation for restoring, at a minimum, the deteriorating oldest sections of the SSBW. Their report is due in 2016. Falmouth is apparently in line for nearly \$1 million of funding in the Environmental Bond Bill to address this.

The Committee worked cooperatively with the Town's representative to the Steamship Authority (SSA), Betsy Gladfelter, and with the Manager of the SSA, Wayne Lamson, to direct traffic more clearly and safely through the Town-owned, SSA-managed parking lot in Woods Hole. The SSA made several improvements in signage and road paint to create safer one-way and two-way corridors for people walking, bicycling, and driving motor vehicles.

Education through public outreach included the second annual Bike Fest in May during Bay State Bike Week. Run in collaboration with the Falmouth Bike Lab, this event included free bike tune-ups, a "slow roll" group bike ride through town and the distribution of refurbished bicycles and new bike helmets. During May's Bike to Work Week, the committee completed a census of early morning cyclists (~ 100) using the SSBW between Falmouth center and Woods Hole while offering education about the committee, bike safety and a light breakfast. On a typical summer weekend we conducted a census from one station on the SSBW, and recorded a peak of over 400 cyclist an hour, or about 2,000 cyclist for the day, and an additional 250 daily walkers.

The Committee applied for two supporting grants, one that was awarded by the Woods Hole Foundation to rent and show films about bicycling at educational forums we have planned. Another proposal is pending with the Community Preservation Committee to fund high priority crossings and connections outlined in the Bike Plan. We also applied for certification with the League of American Cyclists for status as a "Bicycle Friendly Community".

The Committee supports the work of the Cape Cod Commission, Town of Bourne and Friends of the Bourne Rail Trail to extend the SSBW through Bourne to the Cape Cod Canal. We listened to a presentation by Nathan Robinson of the Friends of the Bourne Rail Trail and agreed to give the group the benefit of our experience in extending the SSBW, and offered to send relevant communications to our mailing lists.

The Committee thanks two members for their tireless work and support, Ted Rowan and Jonathan Murray, who have recently "retired" from committee work for now. Ted was our steady Treasurer, and Jonathan our Secretary. We welcome two new members, Clifford Harris who also serves as the Police Department's liaison to the Committee, and Ben Harden who is an active volunteer and leader of the Falmouth Bike Lab. With our new members, the Committee is pursuing our mission of stronger education and enforcement with renewed vigor. Our new Treasurer is Bob Fitzpatrick, and our Secretary is JoAnn Fishbein. Dr. Ed Gross remains our Vice-Chairman and an important link to transportation initiatives as a member of the Regional Joint Transportation Committee.

Prepared by Scott Lindell, Chairman
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