

Bike Train

CASE STUDY

Fairhaven

EDUCATION **ENCOURAGEMENT** ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION ENGINEERING EQUITY | URBAN **RURAL** SUBURBAN

Background

Bike trains are a fun, social, physically active, and environmentally friendly form of transportation. Like a walking school bus, bike trains are made with the help of Safe Routes to School Outreach Coordinators alongside community members who then work together to determine student drop-off and pick-up points along a designated route to school that is under complete supervision of parents/guardians or school staff.

Overview

Leroy L. Wood Elementary School in Fairhaven serves students in grades Pre-K – 5 and is located a quarter mile away from the Phoenix Bike Trail. This bike trail makes up 4.5-miles of the regional South Coast Bikeway, connecting the center of Fairhaven to Mattapoissett. Also connecting to many neighborhoods in Fairhaven, the Phoenix trail serves as a popular route for families to travel to and from school.

With the help of the Fairhaven Livable Streets Committee and several parent volunteers, the Wood School bike train began in Spring 2022 allowing students to bike safely to school on a predetermined route, under adult supervision. Students, parents/guardians, and community members meet weekly at a designated central location and ride about 1.5-miles to the school campus. The group reconvenes on the school campus in the afternoon to ride back to the starting location. Enthusiasm for the bike train continues to grow at Leroy Wood Elementary School, with 50+ student riders joining the program each week!

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Finding a central location to start the bike train gives students from various neighborhoods the opportunity to join the ride despite their proximity to the Phoenix Bike Trail
- ✓ Communicating closely with school administrators to outline logistics and designating volunteer roles prior to the launch of the bike train ensures a smoother and safer ride for all participants
- ✓ By clearly defining the rules and expectations of safe equipment and biking behavior in a permission slip, all participants understand their responsibilities as riders
- ✓ Preparing ahead for the change of seasons in Massachusetts keeps riders safe, comfortable, and willing to participate in any weather condition



Impacts



Since the launch of the Wood School bike train, student participation in biking to and from school has increased, particularly on days where there is no organized bike train



Students learn bike safety skills and gain a sense of responsibility as bicyclists on the road, while enjoying the physical and emotional benefits of active transportation



Families and local community members are participating in broader conversations on improving the bikeability for all areas in town