

Bike Train

CASE STUDY

Lexington

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

Like most of New England, Lexington's hilly and meandering roads are based on former cow paths. Some bike sharrows, sidewalks, and limited unprotected bike lanes dot the landscape. Running through the center of town is the famed Minuteman Bikeway, one of the most successful rail trails in the United States.

The neighborhood Hastings Elementary School sits atop a hill of the arterial Massachusetts Avenue nearest to Route 128. The broad school boundary covers an area encompassing part of downtown to both Routes 128 and Route 2, on one side of the Minuteman Bikeway. Access for many students involves climbing impressive hills and interfacing commuter traffic.

An ambitious bike train was started during the pandemic by a few parents/guardians from the downtown area who saw biking as a reasonable way to approach the school. Covering about 2.8 miles, the route utilizes neighborhood backroads that lead to the arterial road and a signaled three to four-lane intersection. The bike train started small and has grown to being a regular school event.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ As ridership numbers increase, additional support from parents/guardians and police is needed to manage traffic and protect students while at the main intersection
- ✓ Yard signs along the arterial road are a helpful way of communicating safety alerts to passing motorists
- ✓ Additional bike rack storage is needed at the school to house the growing number of student bicycles



Impacts



Increased parent and guardian enthusiasm for active transportation has allowed the bike train to be a daily occurrence



Students and families gain a sense of independence, responsibility, and pride as they conquer the Massachusetts Avenue hill without needing to stop—training wheels and all!



Bike train participants learn to follow the rules of the road and how to share the road space with other vehicles