

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Wednesday, July 26, 2023, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
Mattapoisett Fire Station

Welcome & Introductions: Pete Sutton, ex-officio, called the meeting to order, called roll and announced new board members and their respective affiliations:

- Chair: Jaclyn Youngblood, Deputy Chief Possibility Officer, MassDOT Office of the Secretary
- Public Bicycling: Jeff Larason
- MBTA: Peter Robie
- EOPSS: Andrea Papa
- DPH: Alexandria Papademoulis
- WalkMassachusetts: Brendan Kearney
- MARPA: Jessica Boulanger, NMCOG

Overview on MassDOT's bike/pedestrian projects along the Route 6 corridor

Barbara Lachance - MassDOT's District 5 (Taunton) Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator - provided an update on over a dozen roadway improvement projects (attached) either in planning or construction along the Route 6 corridor from Fall River to Wareham. Many of the projects will evaluate traffic signal timing and geometric improvements to intersections, as well as adding shared use paths, sidewalk and crosswalk improvements.

Questions and comments included:

- SRPEDD conducted a safety analysis along this corridor recently and its great to see so much progress already being made
 - MassDOT received a lot of requests from local municipalities for assistance in improving Route 6 – chief concerns being that it divides these communities and that it's very difficult to cross in either direction. These communities feel like the roadway acts as a physical boundary
- Regarding climate resiliency and the possibility of rising sea levels, is MassDOT addressing the possibility of raising Route 6 in future studies?
 - Yes, MassDOT HQ has a resiliency program that considers low-lying roads, such as Route 6 and that future design will incorporate input from SRPEDD and all impacted communities within its region
- Reconnecting Communities Federal grant program should also be considered in future funding as it relates to making Route 6 more cohesive and better-connected, and could possibly apply to raising a roadway to avoid future flooding
 - Noted. There are several projects, particularly on Cape Cod, where MassDOT is addressing climate resiliency in its planning
- Can you go into a bit more detail regarding Route 6 improvements in Westport?
 - This project is still in preliminary design, though upgrades will be made to the intersection of Sanford Road – it is a priority
- Can you talk about how MassDOT is thinking about design speeds? At the top of the meeting Peter talked about 25 miles per hour and non-deadly speeds. If you're not designing for these lower speeds, you're not really addressing the fact that this highway cuts through our community
 - MassDOT definitely wants to slow down the traffic on Route 6, and I believe that reducing the number of lanes will help. Our traffic section usually goes out after the projects have been designed and they rezone the whole road based on their findings
- Does MassDOT have any plans for making a consistent speed limit (e.g. 30 mph) along the entire length of Route 6?
 - It would be difficult to implement due to the many variables of each roadway section in addition to multiple improvement projects happening on different schedules
- Are there any plans for improvements in the area of the Old Rochester Regional School in Mattapoisett?
 - There are preliminary plans for some on-road bike lanes, though nothing finalized – it is one of several gaps MassDOT is addressing along Route 6
- The town of Mattapoisett is going to be completing a sidewalk project along Mattapoisett Neck Rd between the rail trail and Route 6 and hopefully that will encourage cyclists to use the sidewalk on this very narrow roadway. Please consider a road diet along Route 6 in this area near the elementary school on Shaw St

- MassDOT should consider not only sidewalks on all bridge reconstructions, but also the possibility of shoreline access under these bridges in the form of shared use paths
- Federal funding requires winter maintenance, such as plowing snow along shared use paths once built. Who will be responsible for this?
 - Typically, MassDOT is responsible for maintenance on roadways under its jurisdiction
- Is there still a state law prohibiting cycling on a sidewalk within a business district?
 - Yes, however General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, [Chapter 85, Section 11B](#) state: You may ride on sidewalks outside business districts, unless local laws prohibit sidewalk riding
- Even more caution needs to be given as a motorist when there is a shared use path within a central business district, due to the fact that both pedestrians and cyclists are using the same space – this is something MassDOT should be aware of, especially as it relates to Route 6

Updates and discussion on regional initiatives from the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) Jon Gray, Transportation Planner from SRPEDD provided a comprehensive update (attached) of the southeastern MA regional trails network, including:

- South Coast Bikeway
- Taunton River Trail
- Mansfield/Norton Trail
- Ten Mile River Trail/Metacomet Greenway
- Mount Hope Bay Greenway

Jon also previewed the completion of MassDOT's South Coast Rail Project – Phase 1 which is scheduled to open in fall 2023 and includes six new MBTA commuter rail stations including Taunton, Fall River and New Bedford. Questions and comments included:

- What is the parking situation for those people who don't live in the area?
 - Most shared use paths have trailheads with dedicated parking – such as on Railroad Av in Mattapoisett - and on-street parking is permitted – such as Brant Island Road - unless otherwise noted
- Bike-Walk Fall River would love to have some more information about rail-with-trail. That seems to be our biggest obstacle for the Mount Hope Bay Greenway at present
 - A [feasibility study](#) was conducted on the greenway in 2021 providing alternatives for both rail-to-trail and rail-with trail options. A status update will be requested from MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division as well as the City of Fall River regarding current progress
 - SRPEDD recently met with RIDOT's Division of Planning and that specific connection - Aquidneck Island Bikeway to Fall River - is a huge priority for them because it would link their trail to a future MBTA station
 - MassDOT is not against rail with trail projects, rather everything in context. There's a great example of one that just got built this summer: the Green Line Extension in Somerville where we literally shoehorned a 10-foot-wide shared use path right alongside the railroad right-of-way between the tracks and the retaining wall and its hugely popular - glad that it did get done
- The Town of Bourne recently spent \$500,000 on a rail-with-trail design study that ultimately may not be used in the final iteration, but we learned a lot. Rail-with-trail might work well as a connector, but as a community-servicing bikeway, it provides a lot less utility and can even act as a barrier
- Does MassDOT have a policy on rail-with-trail?
 - Yes, and we hope to publish it by the end of the year as part of the MassTrails Team Shared Use Path Planning and Design Guide
- The caveat here is the controlling interest of the operating railroad and that supercedes any guidelines MassDOT creates. Those guidelines are secondary to the railroad owner's requirement. That is what is taking place currently in Bourne
 - It is also serving a military base, so there is a national security component as well to consider – an additional challenge
- There a whole set of users on the corridor, with rail taking priority if they are already there. Whether the rail line is active or semi-active: every case is different so do your planning, and it sounds like they are
- In North Attleboro, where we can't use the old railroad right-of-way in some spots, we're planning on rerouting the future trail along town-owned power lines, parks and conservation lands. We're hoping to connect to Plainville to the north and Cumberland, RI to the south

Input sought on the new [MassTrails Priority Trails Network map](#) through the South Coast region

Pete Sutton provided an overview on the MassTrails Team's recently released Priority Trails Network (PTN). Since 2019, a majority of MassTrails grants have focused on extending and connecting existing trails to one another, with the ultimate goal of having all trails statewide connect to this established framework. This statewide vision consists primarily of existing and to be built rail trails and greenways that form the core spine route of a statewide connected shared use path network. Where off-road facilities do not exist, high-comfort on-road bike infrastructure is proposed, such as separated bike lanes and side paths

Pete focused attention on the South Coast region and how the PTN largely overlaps the existing South Coast Bikeway and East Coast Greenway designated routes. The one difference is the PTN has some envisioned sections compared to both routes needing to have an established route for current users. He also sought input on proposed routing through Wareham along an abandoned rail corridor vs routing along Route 6, especially based on previous info where MassDOT is constructing shared use paths along Route 6 in three planned construction projects. Comments and questions included:

- The economic benefits of rerouting along Route 6 makes a lot of sense, not just for recreation but for access to jobs. The challenge will be making safe connections for cyclists to get there. Towns should also help make better connections to Route 6 along local roads through grant programs such as complete Streets and Shared Streets and Spaces
 - Agreed. This is one of those instances where just because there is existing railroad right-of-way here, there are constraints such as private ownership. It might be in people's best interest if the PTN is redirected along Route 6 where there is a lot more construction activity and can happen at a much faster pace
- As far as prioritizing Route 6 to other routes, I think: what is the purpose of the particular trail? if it's for having a nice scenic place to bike ride that that would be different. I might not want it on Route 6 as it remains kind of stroad-y. It really depends on what you're using it for. I think what's really cool about the rail trail that we have between Fairhaven and Mattapoisett is that it connects both villages, both downtowns in a way that I think is really helpful and it avoids Route 6. It's actually pleasant to ride along. I think it's a matter of what you want the trail to do
- It's a misconception that Route 6 is where the action is. There's a lot of car-centered development along Route 6 that takes up a ton of space. It's a poor use of acreage for the towns. It's actually kind of a money drain. A lot of businesses are located along Route 6 but if you look at it acre for acre, the downtowns are still where it's at, even though they might look blighted in some places. I think the more we can provide active transportation within and between the historic downtown areas, including New Bedford, the better off we'll be economically as well
- Regarding Wareham, the piece of ROW that was mentioned is almost all privately owned by cranberry bog owners and were completely uninterested in opening up anything due to liability, etc. That's why this never went anywhere. Other issues in Wareham is access through Onset Village: a heavy populated area with no room for a shared use path. Mattapoisett and Marion have existing nice open areas on the water. Everything in Wareham is privately owned. There is no open land that is available.
- At one time, Wareham proposed a sewer line to run right along the MassDOT-owned railroad tracks with the idea of bringing treated sewage back up through and dumping it to Buzzard's Bay but that was also rejected
 - This is exactly what having this priority trails network map is intended to do - especially when we're visiting a regional place getting this kind of input from the local community. This is invaluable stuff. And I'm really, really glad that that we got to bring this up
- Hearing that it is not possible to get a shared use path through Onset is discouraging. There are several attractions that could benefit such as the teaching center for nature science, swimming and many other maritime-related activities. It may be the case where the primary cycling route would have to bypass the downtown area
- Another idea worth exploring is a water taxi between Onset and Monument Beach in Bourne – only three miles across the water compared to ten miles on-road and over the bridge
- You will notice that you have highlighted the section that goes from North Street, which is the feeder road to 195 into the part that we've already finished. That section is already completely designed, we have all the permits for it, and we're waiting to try to get some construction money. However, the one-mile piece that goes west from there - down to the town village and connecting with the newly opened section over the water has completed the 10% concept design. We are pushing for the design process on that to be finished as soon as possible, so that we can link that up

- We're looking for construction money for both parts. There's a park-and-ride ride by I-195. This will allow it to be more heavily utilized and will ease some of the parking concerns in town. Let people park there, get on their bikes, and then ride the whole trail as far as Fair Haven. It will also allow people that are connecting anywhere points east with the soon to be constructed Marion Pathway

Cape Cod bridges replacement – upcoming stakeholder advisory group meeting

Pete Sutton provided some background on MassDOT's Cape Cod Bridges replacement project, currently underway in preliminary design and planning. This program is requiring significant coordination with local, state, and federal partners, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, who owns the bridges. There are still many important factors under consideration, such as the development of design alternatives, and identifying federal funding opportunities. Both bridges will be rebuilt with multimodal accommodations – in the form of 14-foot shared use paths on both bridges - and will provide connections with existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure on both sides of the canal. Pete notified MABPAB members of an upcoming stakeholder advisory group meeting in September that will focus on bike/ped-related aspects of the project and will act on behalf of the board to provide input and comments. As a follow-up, MassDOT wants to clarify that the Advisory Group meeting is not subject to the Open Meeting Law as it is not a decision-making body. Therefore, MassDOT does not publicly advertise these meetings.

Pete then introduced Project Manager Bryan Cordeiro, who addressed the meeting attendees with additional info, including:

- MassDOT are not only evaluating various design alternatives for what the bridges will look like, but also the interconnecting roadways and interchanges associated with the bridges
- Multimodal accommodations are a key purpose and need to the program. We recognize the regional significance of these bridges and what they represent to Cape residents and visitors alike
- We do want to gain feedback from the advisory group on what their concerns are and what they feel is very important for the program. We have discussed the project alternatives as part of various rounds of public information meetings, but also the alternatives that we plan to carry forward have been documented in the environmental notification form (ENF) filing as part of our Massachusetts I Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) process.
- We want to provide more detail coming up and present that to the stakeholder advisory group and the public on what kind of multimodal accommodations we can provide for the connecting roadways within the project area
- We are looking at various local connections, such as working with MassDOT's Rail and Transit Division as well as the Army Corps of Engineers to provide connections to the canal service roads, looking to see what the feasibility is there. It's something we really want to do. We also really want to look at connections to the future Bourne Rail Trail and also the regional significance of multimodal combinations on the Sagamore side, such as park and ride facilities. Also, connections to the Claire Saltonstall Bikeway, which is identified in various documents. So really cognizant of that, we recognize how important it is to the region
- We do want to take everyone's feedback into consideration at future public information meetings as well. I can post a [link](#) to the website, as well as where anyone can drop [comments](#). For everyone here on this call (that is part of the board) definitely reach out to Pete, and as he mentioned, can be the conduit for getting that information over to us, and we can respond

Pete then added the many on-line resources already available for review, including the recently released ENF, which shows preliminary designs and alternatives of many proposed bicycle and pedestrian accommodations. The upcoming stakeholders advisory group meeting will delve into deeper detail, such as the types of roadway crossings being proposed for the shared use paths. Questions and comments included:

- How is MassDOT handling the financing for the bridges and is there a funding plan in place? We need to make sure bike/ped is part of that and not considered an “add-on” as mitigation at a later time. We want to avoid similar mistakes that were made in the past on the Central Artery Big Dig and Green Line Extension projects
 - Yes, multimodal accommodations are baked into current project costs. Regarding overall funding of the projects, that is a key issue of the deliverability and viability of the project at this time. I'm the project manager, I'm leading project development design permitting, utilities, agreements, things like that. But when it comes to financing, that is something that everybody within the Highway Division is actively working on - up to the secretary's office, the Governor's office: the highest levels are doing everything they can to bolster the matching funds for the total project cost

- That's something that the Commonwealth is working really hard on: to bolster those funds so that we can receive Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Federal grant application money and that's really all I can say at this point. We recognize the importance of it
- There are also certain things that are beyond MassDOT's control: There was just an article over the weekend that Congress and the Senate are squabbling over what a type of things are going to be funded this fall. The bipartisan divide in Washington. DC. Is getting so critical now that it may affect projects like this. That's really cause for alarm
 - Good points. These are Federally owned assets and there is a responsibility for the Federal Government to pay for these structures. The State is kicking in as much as we can. Governor Healey announced that up to \$700 million in State funds would be allocated towards the program, but we really are looking for Federal money to help cover the majority of the project costs (currently estimated at \$4 billion)
- The State recently appointed Quentin Palfrey as Director of Federal Funds and Infrastructure. He would be a good resource for MassDOT to connect with, if they haven't already

John Bechard, MassDOT's Deputy Chief Engineer of Project Development, provided some closing comments and additional valuable project information, including:

- MassDOT is working closely in partnership with the Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Highway Administration on the development of the bridge program for the Cape Cod bridges, and we are lock step in partnership on every little detail for these Federal assets; trying to find a way forward to secure the funding through the infrastructure bill in the multiple grants that we have been pursuing
- I appreciate the comment to speak with the Governor's office. Quentin has been part of our discussions. We're regularly discussing this at an executive level, and I get a lot of the down-low and wanted to comment that we're doing our best to package things together, be coordinated, and collaborate with all the right parties. But at the same time, we're developing a project and engaging stakeholders so that we shape the project to the benefit of all users in the Commonwealth
- There was a question asked about making sure that bike/ped was the key part of the project and not an add on and not an offshoot. It is a key part of all MassDOT projects: bicycle/pedestrian accommodations throughout. There was a couple of comments on different items today about the competing interests of the right-of-way and trying to balance the needs of the project and all users: we are committed to moving this forward through public engagement and sharing of information. And we value everyone's input as we continue with our stakeholder outreach.

Other Announcements

- Next MAPBPAB meeting: Wednesday, September 20, 1-3 pm (virtual)
- List of board members in attendance (see below)
- Other attendees:
 - Rich Bilski (MassDOT D5)
 - Ben Muller (MassDOT D6)
 - Alexandria Papadimoulis (DPH)
 - Jacob Stern (MassDOT OPMI)
 - Lorenzo Varone (MassDOT)
 - Cheryl Ann Senior (MassDOT D5)
 - Alexis Hosea-Abbott (PVPC)
 - Brian Pigeon (City of Worcester)
 - Anthony Vona (MassDOT D1)
 - Tom Ruta (MassDOT D2)
 - Nicholas Russo (BRPC)
 - Pedro Hernandez (MassDOT)
 - Josh Grzegorzewski (FHWA)
 - John York (Bourne)
 - Jess Slavin (MassBike)
 - Bailey Pennington (MassDOT)
 - Bill Napolitano

- Casey Cooper (CTPS)
- David Loutzenheiser (MAPC)
- Martha Hevenor (CCC)
- Phil Goff (VHB)
- Phoebe Whitwell (MassDOT)
- Sarah Cannamela (MassDOT)
- Sarah Labossiere (Mass in Motion Fall River)
- Will Gardner (Fairhaven Bikeways Committee)
- Yahaira Graxirena (CMRPC)
- Eileen Botti (VHB)
- Gareth Saunders (MassDOT)
- Ben Breger (MassDOT D2)
- Robin Lepore (Friends of the Mattapoisett Rail Trail)
- Sandra Medeiros (South Coast Bikeway Alliance)
- Gail Rodriguez (Westport Bike Walking Committee)
- Bette Low (Westport Bike Walking Committee)
- Eileen Gunn (Fuss & O'Neill)
- Michael Lorenzo (Town of Mattapoisett)
- Marie Clarnier (SRPEDD)
- Renee Pothier (Friends of the Mattapoisett Rail Trail)

MA BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ADVISORY BOARD

Board Member Sign-In Sheet July 26, 2023 – Virtual Meeting

Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	yes	
Peter Robie MBTA	yes	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	
Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	no	
Gerald Autler DCR	no	
Jaclyn Youngblood MassDOT	yes	
Alexandra Papademoulis DPH	yes	
Phyllis Cahaly MOTT	no	
Andrea Papa EOPSS	yes	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	no	
Jessica Boulanger MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	yes	
Jeff Larason – public member	yes	
Keith MacDonald – public member (South Coast Bikeway Alliance)	yes	
Galen Mook – MassBike	yes	

Karin Goins – public member (Walk/Bike Worcester)	no	
Seun Oluwole – public member	no	
James Fuccione - public member (Mass. Healthy Aging Collaborative)	yes	
Cheryl Casper – public member	no	
Sam Squalia – public member (Fitchburg City Council)	no	
Brendan Kearney - WalkBoston	yes	
Maureen White - public member	no	
Ed Sinofsky – public member (Cape Cod Cycling Club)	yes	
Karen Foster – public member (All Out Adventures)	no	
Meg Robertson – public member	yes	
Alice Brown – public member (Boston Harbor Now)	yes	