

Massachusetts Bicycle & Pedestrian Advisory Board Meeting Notes
Wednesday, July 23, 2025, 1:00 – 3:00 PM
New Bedford Economic Development Commission

Welcome & Introductions: Pete Sutton, ex-officio, called the meeting to order and called roll

The Blue Lane - New Bedford's shared use path network and other municipal initiatives Jennifer Carloni, New Bedford's Director of City Planning provided an overview (attached) on the City's multimodal network, including the Blue Lane Working Waterfront Connector. In 2023, USDOT awarded the City of New Bedford a \$1.7 Million Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The funds will plan the remainder of the Blue Lane, linking it with the existing shared use path network. Other improvement projects include:

- Clasky Common transit-oriented development
- Mass/Housing Works Grant Roadway – Purchase St
- JFK Boulevard Phase III
- I-195 & Route 18 interchange replacement
- Intercity Rail and pedestrian bridge (completed)
- Parking garage (proposed)

Questions and comments included:

- A parking garage is a good idea: taking cars off the road in order to build more new bike lanes
- Has the City considered local ferry service?
 - It has come up recently, especially in light of the future replacement of the Route 6 New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge
 - SRPEDD is in talks with RIDOT about possible future ferry service
- Is the Route 6 New Bedford-Fairhaven Bridge plowed in the winter, and if so, is it removed from the bridge or dumped into the water?
 - Yes, it is plowed. The City also uses a more environmentally friendly salt in the event it lands in the harbor
- Could you speak specifically about the public/private partnership with Cisco Brewers and how that boardwalk trail came to be? It's always interesting to hear how those agreements shake out
 - Cisco knew they needed to connect with the City's existing shared use path network. Their plans went through multiple public meetings, through our planning board and zoning board and different integrations - most of that was site-related specifically. The boardwalk was always there, and there were many discussions about upgrading the material. The permitting process - those state regulations (such as [Chapter 91](#)) really helped to put that project development forward
- Are there any plans to improve bike access near the parking lot and boat ramp? Some green paint would be ideal to delineate the shared use path where it crosses both
 - Noted, appreciate the suggestion
- Great to see upgrades around Clasky Common and other regional bike/ped improvements over the past two decades
 - The City department of public infrastructure deserves a lot of credit – building complete streets elements into every project. A lot of our staff also bicycle and advocate internally for upgrades. The South Coast Bikeway Alliance also is a valuable partner
- Have the RAISE grants been affected by the current administration's decision to rescind certain types of grants?
 - No the RAISE grant is secure and contracts are being signed shortly to begin work
- Having waterfront trails is a great amenity for visitors arriving by boat in order to access restaurants and recreation
 - The City also provides a water taxi service to encourage additional activity

MassDOT bike/ped projects in the Southeastern MA region

- Cheryl-Ann Senior - MassDOT's District 5 (Taunton) Assistant Planner - provided an update on over a dozen roadway improvement projects (attached) either in planning or design 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:

- As someone who works as a primary care assistant and is a cyclist, I'm keenly aware when infrastructure is not ADA-compliant. Why are some cities non-compliant?
 - The City does have an ADA transition plan - figuring out where we need compliant ramps, compliant sidewalks, all of that. But to implement it does cost money. Also, it's not just lifting up the sidewalks: whenever you start reconstructing a roadway, it's not just what you see on the surface, a lot of the cost of roadway construction are all of those underground utilities. And, as you can imagine, in a city like New Bedford we have pipes that are hundreds of years old - we have pipes that are still wooden
 - Utility companies also factor in as they need to open up roadways in certain sections unrelated to normal roadwork
 - MassDOT can only speak for assets it controls. We have a program for upgrading all of our wheelchair ramps that aren't compliant. We review every year, make a list of assets, score the different assets, and then we'll look at addressing those in certain regions to provide the most benefit. We'll look at a corridor projects as well, such as all the Route 6 improvements
 - One of the challenges to implementation of the law has taken a while. The US Access Board is the agency responsible - it's essentially the public right of way accessibility guidelines (PROWAG)
 - Guidelines had to be created for implementing the law, and at various stages had to get approval from various Federal agencies. Unfortunately, bureaucratically it's been bogged down for decades in that kind of process, hence the slow implementation
- It's been satisfying to see MassDOT's roadway design evolving over time, especially along a corridor like Route 6. Previously, designs would have included standard bike lanes and now are being upgraded to shared use paths
 - Yes our complete Streets approach has evolved considerably in the past ten years, where we're constructing high comfort connected facilities for all types of users: families, people with disabilities and increasing numbers of cyclists and pedestrians
- What type of bridge will the new Route 6 New Bedford-Fairhaven be?
 - It's a swing bridge right now but the preferred concept is a vertical lift. MassDOT is working with the city and having meetings with the Harbor Commission on figuring out how that's going to operate and what heights need to be accommodated:
- Is there an advantage one over the other, or is it cost?
 - The city recognizes that on the user side, in terms of the cars and pedestrians and bicyclists the lift bridge is the quickest. Vertical lift also has the advantage of being able to house equipment on top of the structure. But there were a lot of debates and concern that we had about implementing a height restriction for the water users. So that's a big consideration for any port
 - Especially here, we're seeing bigger and bigger ships - that makes the structure larger. Which then has design considerations. We're a historic city next to another historic town that has many historic features within proximity - also a concern for design
- Many users of the bridge think the project limits should be extended to middle St in Fairhaven
 - That is something the MPO could advocate for
- What are you doing to reduce speeds? We've had several fatalities within that corridor from Fairhaven to Mattapoisett, and also in Dartmouth. During a recent meeting for the bridge project, SCBA demanded a shared use path instead of a shoulder which was being proposed. Average vehicle speeds are 40 mph and the bridge surface is slick, adding to the unsafe conditions
- It's built for speed. You have a playground, a marina, all kinds of development, and restaurants on the opposite side. There's no place to safely cross until you get to Middle Street. So how can that be? We should at least put a safe crossing temporarily - a rectangular rapid flashing beacon. Something needs to be done, because that playground is very popular. On one of our recent rides a cyclist was hit from somebody going in and out, and you have children there, and you have people that just don't expect a cyclist or a pedestrian
- There are some bottlenecks that need to be addressed on the bridge, in addition to the project scope being expanded. In project management, trying to keep the project focused on one issue - they want to leave out as much as they can. They want to shrink wrap the project area around their feature, and you end up with things like the rest of Pope's Island, and it really needs to have a parallel project or be included in that project because it's the classic sidewalk to nowhere. You get

this beautiful bridge with 10 foot wide shared, use paths on both sides to meet the healthy transportation requirements, and then it stops, and there's nothing but rubble

- MassDOT has a person whose job title is Complete Streets Engineer, is that correct? I emailed that person to a year ago with some very specific questions about how complete streets is being implemented, and there are questions I'd had for years. Now that they had a person with that title, I figured finally, someone will answer them. I got no response. I did a follow up email a month later, I got no response. Is that an office that's public facing at all? Or how do I interact with that office?
 - MassDOT Complete Streets did not receive this email enquiry but will now respond to any concerns (*it was later determined that it was sent to an incorrect email address*)
- There really should be in the short term - something to accommodate people with bikes getting from Fairhaven to New Bedford - in a safe way that is not riddled with gravel, crossing multiple parking lots, trucking coming in and out. Kids are definitely going to get run over
- New Bedford just completed a storm water resiliency project near 6/140 that we've done over on our part of it. I think that should coordinate with whatever MassDOT is proposing there. We really did a lot of landscaping – as much as we could in our corridor. It's part of a larger project with Buttonwood Brook water quality improvements. I just want to raise that as something as you're in preliminary design

Updates and input on bike/pedestrian advocacy from the South Coast Bikeway Alliance

Sandy Medeiros from SCBA provided an overview on the regional advocacy group that spans ten communities along the South Coast. The ultimate goal/vision will be a 50-mile continuous system of bike paths, multi-use paths and bike lanes connecting existing routes in Rhode Island to Cape Cod.

Projects and initiatives highlighted include:

- Completed shared use paths
- Group rides and pop-up events to raise awareness
- Bike summits
- Bicycle recycling program
- Filling major gaps between Fall River and New Bedford and in Wareham Center

Questions and comments included:

- MassTrails has been such a important part of advancing a lot of these different projects. For example, I think the feasibility study for the Blue Lane was funded through MassTrails. I know part of the Mattapoisett Rail Trail was funded through MassTrails that connects to the future Marion shared use path project
- The Wareham shared use path construction - Narrows Road and Minot Avenue - at the SRPEDD office we've got some old documents, I just happened to find the 1978 bikeway plan which almost exactly describe the Narrows Road project. It's been a concept for quite a while
 - Some of these projects are not years old, but decades old. Hopefully, we'll see them all through
- The Friends of the Mattapoisett Rail Trail just celebrated 25 years
- South Coast Bikeway Alliance meets monthly. We do need additional members, especially for the west end of our region - Swansea, Somerset, Fall River - it's difficult to recruit people. I talk to everybody I see. When they say what town? That's the first question: I ask, where do you live? It's hard to keep people engaged if nothing's getting done or not happening fast enough
- Safe Routes to School program has been super helpful in Fairhaven. They actually have a bike bus. Parents meet up at a central location and take the rail trail to school. There's also a safe routes to school project being constructed from Sconticut Neck Road connecting to the local elementary school

Other Announcements

- Pete Sutton provided an update regarding new MABPAB membership on the advocacy side: MassDOT put out a call for serving as public members on the Advisory Board - six different members representing bicycle interests and pedestrian interests each – 12 total. Pete and Jaclyn reviewed 36 applicants and made their selections for further vetting. The applications are currently being reviewed by the Governor's Office Boards and Commissions staff
- Jaclyn Youngblood provided an update on MassDOT's **Direct Vision Study Experiential Activity: Truck's Eye View**. With support from MassDOT District Office volunteers, we held simultaneous

experiences

at 5 out of 6 District Touch a Truck events. These events were intended to bring the results of the Direct Vision Study to a wider audience and to families, in particular

- Jaclyn also announced the third meeting of the Special Commission on Micromobility will be held on September 16. The Commission aims to think about a framework for how we might imagine regulation, etc, Legislation makes clear that there are three requirements for the Commission: One is to look at state and local regulations around vehicles and where they can go. The second is to make recommendations about those regulations, or various other things related to managing the usage of those devices in the Commonwealth. The third is to make recommendations about increasing the usage of those devices. A report on findings is due back to the Legislature by the end of this calendar year
- Next [Micromobility Commission](#) meeting: September 16, Virtual, 10 am-12 pm
- Next MAPBPAB meeting: September 17, Virtual, 1-3 pm

- List of board members in attendance (see below)
- Other attendees:

- Barbara Lachance (MassDOT D5)
- Richard Bilsky (MassDOT D5)
- Pam Haznar (Mattapoisett)
- Andrew Jennings (Billerica)
- Colleen Medeiros (CCC)
- Lorenzo Varone (MassDOT)
- Francisco Lovera (MassDOT)
- Kyle Casiglio (CTPS)
- Matt Dyer (OCPC)
- Jon Gray (SRPEDD)
- Jonah Williams (MassDOT)
- Pedro Hernandez (MassDOT)
- Emily Paskewicz (ECGA)
- Alexandria Papadimoulis (DPH)
- John York (Bourne)
- Josh Grzegorzewski (FHWA)
- Andrea Duarte (SRPEDD)
- Sarah Cannamela (MassDOT D2)
- Nick Daigle (MassDOT D3)
- Rik Ahlberg (Provincetown)
- Shawn Bailey (OCPC)
- Dan Murphy (Brookline)
- Christian MilNeil (StreetsBlog Mass)
- Chris Sorensen (MassDOT D1)
- Kyle Mowatt (OCPC)
- Laura Bermol Diaz (Town of Fairhaven)
- Colleen Pekarul (AECOM)
- Joyia Smikle (CCC)
- Tom Ruta (MassDOT D2)
- Diane Hayes (MassDOT D5)
- Tiandra Ray (MassDOT)
- Betsy Johnson (WalkBike Springfield)
- Paul Pawlowski (SCBA)
- Chelle Dandelion (New Bedford)
- Dave Fass (New Bedford)

**Board Member Sign-In Sheet
July 23, 2025 – Virtual**

Member Name	Attended	Notes
Tom DiPaolo MassDOT-Highway	no	
Matt Warfield MBTA	yes	
Pete Sutton MassDOT-Planning	yes	
Kurt Gaertner EOEEA	yes	
Gerald Autler DCR	yes	
Jaclyn Youngblood MassDOT	yes	
Kirby Lecy DPH	no	
Charlie Ticotsky MOTT	no	
Andrea Papa EOPSS	no	
Jeff McCollough MARPA	yes	
Amanuel Regassa MARPA	yes	
Jackie Jones MARPA	no	
– public member	vacant	
– public member	vacant	
Galen Mook – MassBike	no	
– public member	vacant	
– public member	vacant	
- public member	vacant	
– public member	vacant	
– public member	vacant	
Brendan Kearney - WalkBoston	yes	
- public member	vacant	
Ed Sinofsky – public member (Cape Cod Cycling Club)	no	
Karen Foster – public member (All Out Adventures)	no	
– public member	vacant	
– public member	vacant	