



South Coast Bikeway Committee Meeting Notes

May 8, 2013 – Dartmouth Town Hall Room 103

Attendees: Bob Espindola, Fairhaven –Julie Kelly, Mass in Motion Fall River – Gail Roderigues, Westport/Voices–Ken Pottel, Fairhaven – Bonne DeSousa, Mattapoissett – Eileen Allgor, Wareham – Freddie Estremera, New Bedford – Brian Pearson, Fall River – Karen Pearson, Fall River –Jackie Schmidt, SRPEDD –

Agenda Items

- 1. Meeting Status:** The meeting is not a formal public meeting due to posting requirements in the Town of Dartmouth. Meeting minutes cannot be approved. No formal business may be undertaken.
- 2. Town Briefs:**
 - **Marion** has been working for years to acquire a right-of-way (330'x 16' wide) associated with the connection to Front Street with no success. Recently the Marion Pathways Committee began to search for an alternate route and it appears there may be a viable route. Marion is talking with the land owner who would like to learn more about the status and plans for the bikeway in Wareham. Contact information for Wareham Community Pathway was provided.
 - **Carver** has been making significant progress. The Highway Department has agreed to place sharrows on all on-road portions of the Carver Bike Path. Carver is Requesting a meeting with A.D. Makepiece in order to develop a potential off-road path that will connect to the Furnace Road portion of the Wareham Community Path. Plymouth has contacted Carver to plan the connection of bike paths in these two towns.
- 3. East Coast Greenway Presentation** Eric Weis , East Coast Greenway

Introduction: Eric commented that the News from Marion, reflects his own experience on the East Coast Greenways Project: progress is achieved through persistence and patience. He has been heartened in recent months by progress in three locations along the greenway where off road bikeway plans have been stalled for years: 1)In an uncharacteristic move by National Grid, easements were granted for a Bikeway project. 2) Major Grants were provided to perform necessary work to allow another project to go forward. 3) A landownership in another area change created an opportunity for a long sought easement to be acquired.

Description of the East Coast Greenway (ECG): 2900 miles of existing and planned off-road bikeways from Maine to Florida. The "Spine Route" connects major cities of the east coast. 29% of the off-road trail is complete. Where the off road routes are not complete, Alternate on-road trails that connect the off-road trails have been identified and 22 % of these have been marked. To create the trail East Coast Greenways works with a variety of local and regional organizations including local bike path committees, transportation and recreation Agencies, at county and state levels, tourism councils, as well as national bicycling advocacy groups like Adventure Cycling.

South Coast Bikeway alternate route: ECG is excited at the prospect of working with the South Coast Bikeway Committee to incorporate our route as an "alternate" route that creates a loop through our historically and culturally important region. The loop is composed of Routes from Boston to Worcester, Worcester to Providence, Providence to Cape Cod Canal, Cape Cod Canal to Provincetown, Provincetown to Boston (Via Ferry). Accomplished cyclists putting in full days of cycling are expected to complete the loop in about five days of cycling. Cyclists who stop to explore historical, recreational and cultural sites will take more time to complete the loop. ECG proposes to work with South Coast Bikeway Committee assistance to develop

- the best final and interim routes
- a signage plan for their trail signage,
- a travel guide designed specifically for bike touring with information about local features, good stops, nice vistas, restaurants and food shops, lodging.
- maps and cues for segments of the trails that are the core of the travel guide
- a plan to launch the route, which means developing a marketing plan in concert with Mass and RI tourism councils, Mass DOT and Mass DCR. The launch will be integrated with plans for completing key infrastructure to ensure the best bicycling experience for East Coast Greenway cyclists.

General discussion

- Historically this process has taken 2-6 years in other regions. The first step is to develop the best route. This has historically been a time consuming process, but with new technology, the plan will likely come together more easily. Eric recommends working with experienced cyclists who know the roads. The ECG process for determining routes will likely be to publish completed segments using the Web-based tool, and ask regular riders to map their favorite connecting routes between established segments. ECG will evaluate the proposed connectors for the kind of riders that ECG attracts. A variety of factors, many of which have already been explored in the SRPEDD Bikeway planning process, will go into designating the route. South Coast Bikeway Committee can help by identifying the people who can help map the connections.
- Eric showed us examples of the trail signs which are generally smaller than the signs that mark the locally developed trails. This is by design because ECG is utilizing trails that have been developed locally. ECG recognizes that the local community, counties and states that build the bikeways have by far the greatest interest in the bike routes. ECG promotes use of these paths and helps to bring tourism to the areas they pass through, but local commuters and recreational riders are the primary users.
- Next Steps: Eric asked for a statement from the South Coast bikeway Committee endorsing the incorporation of the East Coast Greenway into our bikeway planning.
- Designating Spine Routes and Alternates Routes. It was noted that the South Coast Bikeway Committee is having difficulties designating the final South Coast Bikeway Route. There are currently off road sections in the plan, which are many years from completion. There are parallel on road sections that are being realized but which don't serve the same user communities as the off road plan. As we build our organization we are looking for ways to properly characterize the bikeway and route so that, where alternate routes are necessary, the differences do not become divisive.

Eric stated that the ECG is oriented to tourism, but recognizes that long distance touring routes, shorter distance commuting routes, and local recreational and exercise routes serve different user groups but are compatible uses. The goal of ECG is a 100% off road bike route From Florida-Maine, but ECG policy is to designate the best interim alternate route while waiting for the vision to be complete. There are several sections where the official ECG route is paralleled by different local routes that are preferred by some riders for the characteristics they offer - Maine, Connecticut are some examples. Preferred routes differ substantially among bicyclists based on innumerable factors. The sample trail guide published by ECG illustrates how appropriate route mapping techniques are inclusive rather than divisive. The ECG route maps distinguish between On Road/Off road and planned/currently available and also show the local network of roads and that are also available to bicyclists.

4. The Meeting Adjourned at 7:30