

## **2008 Annual Report Bicycle Advisory Committee**

**ROLE:** To advise the Selectmen and other Town boards and departments on issues that concern bicycling and related forms of human-powered transportation; to work with surrounding communities in developing a regional network of safe and efficient interconnections; and to promote these modes of travel as safe and healthful alternatives to the automobile.

**APPOINTED** by the Selectmen: Chair Peggy Enders (beginning November 2008), Laurel Carpenter, John Frey, George Gagliardi, Marita Hartshorn, Stew Kennedy (Chair, January through October 2008), Abe Shenker, Mike Tabaczynski, and Jerry VanHook. Liaisons: Hank Manz, Selectmen; Sandra Shaw, Recreation; and Richard Canale, Planning. Honorary member: Jere Frick.

### **HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Recommended to the Board of Selectmen that a pilot program be planned for the 2008-2009 snow season to plow snow on the Minuteman Bikeway in order to allow pedestrian and bicycle use of the Bikeway through the winter. The original proposal to the Selectmen was based on the successful experience in Arlington during the preceding winter. After several months' negotiation and discussion, a series of recommendations was developed with the Town and presented to and approved by the Selectmen at their November 24 meeting. The pilot proposal was approved by the Selectmen with the provision that funding for the trial year will be provided from private funding sources. Working closely with the Friends of Lexington Bikeways, a fund raising effort is underway; as of this writing, donations have been enthusiastic and generous.
- Working closely with representatives from the Cambridge, Arlington, and Bedford bicycle committees, organized a "rolling celebration" on Sunday, October 5, to recognize the induction of the Minuteman Commuter Bikeway into the national Rail-Trail Conservancy's Hall of Fame – only the fifth trail in the country to receive this distinction. In collaboration with the Friends of Lexington Bikeways and with the help of the Citizens for Lexington Conservation, an afternoon celebration was organized on the green next to the Visitors' Center. The proceeds from a raffle, made possible by donations from Lexington businesses and individuals, will help with bicycle advocacy and education programs in 2009. Featured speakers during the celebration included representatives from the Rails-to-Trails conservancy, MassBikes, and state government. A highlight of the afternoon was the recognition of the efforts of Bikeway founders Cathy Buckley Lewis, Tom Fortmann, and Allen McLennan.
- Organized volunteer help and conducted spring clean-up along the Lexington stretch of the Minuteman Bikeway. During July and early August, organized volunteer pruning and brush-cutting activities along the Bikeway. Continued light pruning and brush removal along the Bikeway and on the Town's other bike paths, as needed, throughout the year. Members served as primary stewards of their sections of the Bikeway, thus providing close scrutiny for problems throughout the year over the entire Lexington portion.
- Working with the DPW, identified and prioritized Bikeway maintenance needs for DPW. Fielded citizens' concerns about safety, visibility and signage along the Bikeway and coordinated with DPW to correct problems.
- Continued monitoring the usage and effects on traffic flow of the bike/pedestrian lanes on Hartwell Avenue through the year-long trial program ending in October, which resulted in the decision to continue maintenance of those lanes.
- With funding for materials from a 2007 grant under the State Recreational Trails Program, and in close cooperation with the Lexington Conservation Stewards, replaced an unsafe bridge over a branch of the Kiln Brook in Meagherville conservation area, rerouted trails and built four boardwalks totaling over 1,000 linear feet in the Lower Fine Brook conservation area. Also made

repairs to several boardwalks in the Dunback and Parker Meadows conservation areas. Received notice that the grant application submitted under the 2008 Recreational Trails Program has been approved by the State. This approval should permit trail improvements proposed for Willard's Woods, Hayden Woods, and Dunback Meadow to be carried out in 2009.

- Continued researching maps and doing site-walks in Town land and over easements leading to Town land, particularly near schools, as part of on-going efforts to identify and develop safe walking and bicycling routes for parents and school children.
- Continued active support on the West Lexington Greenway (WLG) Task Force. Working closely with Conservation and Recreation, helped oversee the development, public review, and completion of the WLG Master Plan. Assisted in the near completion of the 25 per cent design of the Minuteman Connector trail that, when completed, will connect the Minuteman Bikeway to the Minuteman National Historical Park Battle Road Trail.
- Working with the DPW and Recreation Department, and using funds from a State grant, succeeded in the installation of ten new bicycle racks in the town center and at schools and recreational areas.
- In cooperation with bicycle committees in Bedford and Arlington, placed town identification markers on bollards and gates along the Minuteman Bikeway.
- Continued outreach to other communities and groups working to establish bikeways and rails-to-trails conversions, leveraging our lessons learned from the hugely successful Minuteman Commuter Bikeway. Continued participation in the State legislature's Rails / Trails, Bicycle, Pedestrian caucus meetings, and participated in the State Executive Office of Transportation's update of plans for the statewide bicycling network, providing comments on the draft plan. Participated in the state-sponsored annual bicycling / pedestrian conference, *Moving Together*.
- Continued to support the Sidewalk Committee and the Traffic Mitigation Group by providing an active member as a liaison to each. Working collaboratively with these groups, guidelines are being developed for consideration by the Town to improve fog line striping practices on major high volume roads in accordance with current Massachusetts Highway design guidelines that would permit wider bicycle travel lanes as well as slow down traffic on these roads.
- Continued to provide close liaison with Conservation Stewards' work.