

# Bicycle committee building steam

By Peter J. Brown  
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PROVINCETOWN—The bicycle committee has a long list of projects that it is pursuing, including adding more bike racks around town, bringing back a bike rack cost sharing grant program and painting bike lanes on Shank Painter Road.

“There are a lot of projects in motion right now, so it’s a great time to be on the bicycle committee,” said member Rik Ahlberg, speaking for himself and not for the whole committee. “Most of the members are new, myself included, so there’s a lot of energy.”

The Cape Cod Commission, Cape Cod National Seashore, and the towns of Provincetown, Truro and Wellfleet intend to complete the final report on “The Outer Cape Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan” by the end of 2015. A public workshop to review the Master Plan will be held here this summer so local residents can weigh in.

The multiple tasks associated with the development of the Master Plan are overseen by a steering committee. Provincetown bicycle committee chair Roger Chauvette and assistant DPW Director Eric Larson represent Provincetown on the committee.

There were only three people from Provincetown at the last public workshop in Wellfleet in March.

“We clearly need more local participation. Truro and Wellfleet have long distances to address, while we have a compact street grid and a lot more people on bikes,” said Ahlberg in an e-mail. “The problems are very different. The other towns

are dealing with through traffic. We have to deal with circulation within town. The vast majority of reported [bike] accidents [on the Outer Cape] are happening in Provincetown. So making it safer to be on a bike or on foot is really important.”

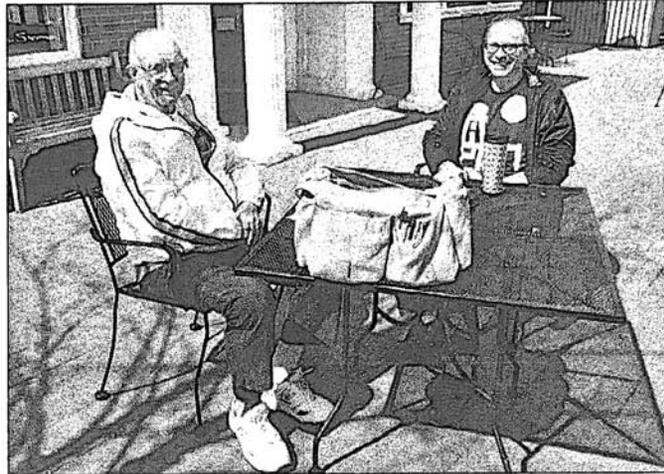
In early June, an expert from MassBike, an organization that assists town all over the state with bike planning, will be in Provincetown to assess streets and intersections, and make recommendations on how to improve bike routes.

“It will be helpful to get an outside perspective,” said Ahlberg. “We’re also talking about bringing back the bike rack cost sharing grant program since there has been an uptick in interest in seeing more bike racks in town.”

At the Year-Rounders’ Festival, the committee kept track of what local residents wanted to see happen with respect to biking around town. They compiled a long list, which includes such ideas as starting a “bike share” program in town, placing bike racks in car parking spaces on Commercial Street downtown during the summer, and replacing the post office’s untended flowerbeds with bike racks.

At Town Meeting, Acting Police Chief Jim Golden stated that the town needs three to four times as many bike racks as it has deployed now.

“Almost all of the town’s properties have bike racks at this point—they’re in every parking lot, at every municipal building, in the parks, and on the pier. ... At the suggestion of a member of the community at the Year-Rounders



Provincetown Bicycle Committee chair Roger Chauvette (left) and member Rik Ahlberg. PHOTO PETER BROWN

Festival, I spoke recently with the postmaster about things that can be done to improve their bike-parking situation,” said Ahlberg. “He was very enthusiastic, so hopefully we’ll see some improvements there this season.”

Destinations that could use bike racks include the breakwater, and conservation areas like Nicky’s Park, and Shank Painter Pond could use some defined bike parking.

“There’s no money in the town budget earmarked for bike racks, so I expect we may request grant money from the Visitor Services Board or the Community Preservation Committee,” said Ahlberg.

Besides the bicycle committee, the Provincetown 365 group is exploring how to get bike lanes painted on Shank Painter Road.

“Some sections are great with wide, smooth shoulders. But there are places where the pavement isn’t wide enough for bike lanes on both sides of the road. And at other spots

like to see sharrows —shared lane markings—painted on streets that are too narrow for bike lanes, and the bike lanes on Bradford Street Extension actually painted with little bike icons. Education for year-rounders and some bike skills training at the schools are needed, too.

“I can ride from one end of town to the other in 15 minutes. We have four bike shops, so I don’t need to have my own repair tools. And people who visit say amazing things about our bike culture,” said Ahlberg, who wants to see more people on bikes year round, more kids on bikes, and more people riding to Stop & Shop rather than driving.

Lauren McKean, park planner at the National Seashore, is coordinating the Seashore’s involvement in the Master Plan.

“This involves bicycle trails and pedestrian amenities throughout the Outer Cape and the Seashore. It is to provide an interconnected bicycle and pedestrian trail network that could be used by visitors and residents alike to enjoy expanded and enhanced recreational and commuting opportunities,” said McKean in an e-mail. “These projects may include bicycle trail and sidewalk construction or improvements, share-the-road bicycle accommodations, biking and walking safety improvements, and options for extending the Cape Cod Rail Trail as a spine route to the end of the Cape.”

The National Seashore is also working on an environmental assessment with particular focus on that portion of the Master Plan that includes lands managed by the Seashore.

the pavement is in really rough condition, so you wouldn’t want to encourage people to ride their bikes there unless the pavement was improved,” said Ahlberg.

Ahlberg spent a lot of time this winter taking pictures of bike racks and putting together a map of all the locations he found on Google maps. (A recent version of the map can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/ptbikepark>.)

“It gives an overview of where bike parking is good and where it can be improved. And people have said it’s helpful for tourists to plan their visits as well,” Ahlberg said. “There’s been some discussion of looking at more on-street bike parking like the bike corral we have at the library. And there may be an opportunity to do some valet bike parking during the busiest event weeks in the summer.”

Because Provincetown is so compact and the speed limits are low, it is a really great town for riding a bike. However, Ahlberg would