

FOR SAFETY'S SAKE

Because Route 6A follows a narrow, winding and sometimes crowded path, safety is a paramount consideration. Everyone using Route 6A should use extreme caution in sharing the roadway. Cyclists should observe these guidelines:

- Keep to the right;
- Ride in a straight line, single file;
- Wear bright, highly visible clothing, especially at dusk;
- Wear protective headgear. This is required by Massachusetts law for those 12 and younger, and recommended for bicyclists of all ages;
- Stop at all stop signs;
- Be sure young children are strapped securely into carriers;
- Look behind you, and alert others before passing them;
- Use bells, horns or voice to alert pedestrians and motorists;
- Dismount and walk across railroad crossings;
- Always respect public and private property along the way;

Try to leave the route cleaner than you found it.



PARKING

There is very limited parking in most villages along Route 6A, so consider off-road parking. Look for parking at:

- Shawme Crowell State Forest in Sandwich;
- Exit 6 Park & Ride lot off Route 6 at Route 132 in Barnstable;
- Exit 10 Park & Ride lot off Route 6 at Route 124 in Harwich;
- Route 134 at the Cape Cod Rail Trail in Dennis;
- Route 137 at the Cape Cod Rail Trail in Brewster;
- Nickerson State Park, also in Brewster.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Learn more about Route 6A and bicycling elsewhere on Cape Cod by consulting brochures available from the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce (508-862-0700 and www.capecodchamber.org) and at town information centers.

You may also call the Cape Cod Commission at 508-362-3828 or log onto its Internet Web site at www.gocapecod.org. Another resource is the Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition (617-542-BIKE or www.massbike.org).

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Old King's Highway

REGIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

BIKE MAP



*Cape Cod
Massachusetts*

WELCOME TO THE OLD KING'S HIGHWAY

Where once Native Americans trod on journeys between Plymouth and Provincetown, highway Route 6A gracefully beckons today's travelers. Welcome to Route 6A, and the Old King's Highway Regional Historic District, America's largest designated historic district.

Route 6A forms the heart of the historic district, which is bounded roughly by the Mid Cape Highway (Route 6) on the south and Cape Cod Bay to the north, and includes parts of Sandwich, Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis, Brewster and Orleans. Known as The Old King's Highway, the road winds east and west for 34 miles, past scenic harbors, great salt marshes and places that endure as relics of the storied American past.

This brochure and map will help you to navigate this very special place on Cape Cod, particularly if you plan to explore it on a bicycle.



Route 6A is best suited for experienced bicyclists because it is heavily traveled by cars and other motorized vehicles. Other routes, however, pass through the historic district. Families and more casual bicyclists, may want to begin by trying the nearby Setucket Road Bike Path (in Yarmouth and Dennis) and the 25-mile Cape Cod Rail Trail (between Dennis and Wellfleet, joining Route 6A at Nickerson State Park in Brewster). These facilities are ideal for exploring the area apart from traffic and noise.

In addition, the Claire Saltonstall Bikeway is an alternative for those seeking a varied and ever-changing environment on a combination of routes and paths.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROUTE 6A

From its apparent beginning as a Native American trail, Route 6A evolved into a principal east-west cart path for early Cape Cod farmers and other settlers. In the late 17th century it became an extension of the Plymouth Colony's "King's Highway."

With the rise of 18th century maritime activities on Cape Cod, sea captain homes, taverns and other commercial activities sprouted along the route, giving occasion to Boston-Provincetown stagecoaches to stop.

In the next century, the demise of maritime industries prompted a focus on cranberry production in the district. Meantime, residents who had seen the corridor stripped of trees to support farming and shipbuilding planted new shade trees. Many of these, now mature, grace the roadway today.



By the early 20th century as automobiles placed horse-drawn carriages and tourism developed on the Cape, the highway required a paved surface. Preservation efforts ensued, and today Route 6A remains faithful to the original trail in most areas.

NECESSITIES

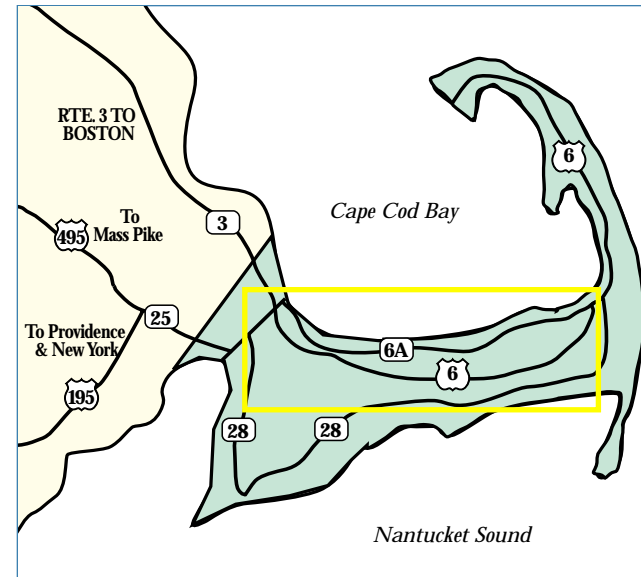
Before you set out on Route 6A, inspect your bike or visit a bike shop to be sure your bicycle is in road-ready condition. There are limited repair facilities along the way except for the occasional auto filling station. (Bike rental and repair facilities may be found along the Cape Cod Rail Trail).

Rest rooms also are limited (there are public facilities at Nickerson State Park in Brewster) but you can refresh yourself with a drink or snack at one of the many curbside stores along the way.

ALONG THE WAY

The historic character of the Old King's Highway makes it a unique experience for bicyclists, walkers and motorists alike. Look for these scenic byway attractions among the many you will encounter:

- Cape Cod Canal Bicycle Paths – Bourne
- Historic Sandwich Village - Sandwich
- Heritage Plantation – Sandwich
- Trayser Museum – Barnstable
- Winslow Crocker House – Yarmouth
- Josiah Dennis Manse & Old West Schoolhouse – Dennis
- Nickerson State Park – Brewster
- Jonathan Young Windmill - Orleans
- Cape Cod Rail Trail (bike trail) – Dennis, Harwich, Brewster & Orleans



VIEWS AND VISTAS

You will enjoy the Historic District fully if you take the time to divert from Route 6A proper to explore the many vistas and natural attractions, particularly to the north. Using this map, select your diversions before your ride then look for roadways and off-road access points to them:

- Sandwich Harbor and the salt marshes – Sandwich
- Barnstable Harbor and the view of Sandy Neck – Barnstable
- Ancient Cemetery – Yarmouth Port
- Scargo Lake & Scargo Tower – Dennis
- Sesuit Harbor – East Dennis
- Stony Brook & the tidal flats – Brewster
- Skaket Beach & Rock Harbor – Orleans

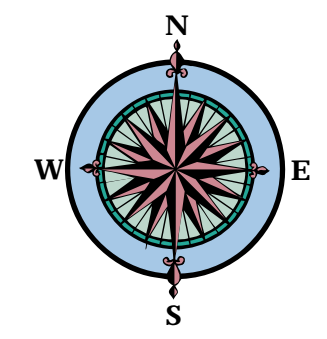
More information about these sites is available at town information centers and chambers of commerce.

LEGEND

- ◆ Route 6 Interchanges
- Route 6 No bicycles
- Bike Route
- Bike Path
- Route 6A
- Roads & Streets
- Lesser Streets
- Railroad
- ★ Towns & Villages
- State Parks
- P Public Parking
- Sites & Vistas

Approximate Scale

0 1 2 Miles



Cape Cod Bay

The Old King's Highway Regional Historic District is the area between Route 6 and Cape Cod Bay within the towns of Sandwich, Barnstable, Yarmouth, Dennis, Brewster and Orleans.

