



Falmouth Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Public Meeting #1

Meeting Notes | January 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.

Presentation:

Steven Tupper, Transportation Program Manager from the Cape Cod Commission (CCC), welcomed attendees to the virtual public meeting and introduced CCC staff who will be assisting with the meeting as well as introduced staff members from the Town of Falmouth, including Town Manager Julian Suso, Town Engineer Jim McLaughlin and Town Planner Tom Bott. Mr. McLaughlin gave a brief introduction on the Town's participation in the MassDOT Complete Streets program.

Colleen Medeiros, Transportation Engineer from the CCC, then gave an overview presentation on what is a complete street and a prioritization plan. She also went over the project schedules and provided an overview of the existing conditions in Falmouth. The existing conditions features such as sidewalk, crosswalks, activity centers, traffic volumes and bicycle/pedestrian crash data, can be viewed using a GIS web tool that will be made available to the public within the public comment web tool.

After her presentation, attendees were assigned to two breakout rooms to view a demonstration of the public comment web tool. The breakout rooms also gave an opportunity for attendees to provide general comments to CCC Staff as well as potential locations for a Complete Street project. Before the breakout rooms, there was an opportunity for clarifications.

Opportunity for Questions

- Scott Lindell: Could you clarify: besides the two public meetings, are there other ways you'll be soliciting public input? For the prioritization process, how will public input be integrated (polling, for example)?
 - Answer: We have developed a public comment web tool where the public can provide input on potential projects. The public comment tool and public comment period will be open until the end of the month. (Note the public comment period has been extended to 2/5/21). Public comments will also be accepted by contacting Colleen Medeiros either by phone or email. In the Spring, we will be looking for

additional public feedback at our second public meeting on the priority listing of the complete streets projects along with another public comment period.

- Chris McGuire: You said rt. 28 wouldn't be eligible, but you referenced ongoing projects regarding crosswalks across rt. 28. Are projects crossing a state road eligible for funding or not?
 - Answer: Correct, projects that are located on a state-owned roadway, such as Route 28 or Route 28A, are not eligible to receive the MassDOT Tier 3 construction funding. The ongoing projects that were included in tonight's presentation were provided as a reference for attendees to inform them of current projects the Town has already been working on to address multimodal needs in the community.
- Jane Perry: Are we giving our public comments in these breakout rooms?
 - Answer: Yes, we are looking forward to hearing public comments in the breakout rooms as their format will lend itself to a smaller and more informal opportunity for all voices to be heard tonight. In addition, we have a public comment web tool where people can provide their comments after this meeting. The public comment tool will be opened until the end of the month. (Note public comment period has been extended to 2/5/21).
- Scott Lindell: Would it be possible to push back the deadline for public comments? The bikeways committee has a meeting on February 3, where public input could be collected via discussion.
 - Answer: In coordination with the Town, the public comment period has been moved to February 5, 2021.
- Pamela Rothstein: I am a member of bike and pedestrian committee. How are you advertising the comment period? There was an article in the paper, but we also have communication methods of our own.
 - Answer: The Commission is planning to prepare a press release and social media posts announcing the public comment web tool and comment period. The Town is also planning on getting the word out through their channels and to their committees. We are happy to follow up with you if you have any suggestions as we want to make sure the comment period and the web tool is shared as broadly as possible.

Brainstorming Session

Breakout Room 1

Interested in locations that present challenges, and projects that should be prioritized as we move forward in the process.

Prompt Questions

- What locations present challenges for roadways users? As a pedestrian? As a bicyclist?
- Where are the existing safety issues?
- What are the priority projects you want to see in Falmouth?
- Any unique out-of-the-box suggestions (i.e. lockers at beaches to encourage biking)?
- Where are new or updated transit accommodations needed most?
- What are specific destinations that you feel are not currently well-served for pedestrians or bicyclists?
- Are there any unique challenges for different times of year (peak vs off)?
- Any unique challenges for specific users groups ex: childrens, seniors, individuals with mobility challenges, summer workers, visitors unfamiliar with the area?

Public Comments

- Ken Cheitlin: Resident of Bourne, Bourne is doing its own complete streets project. Ken is excited to see Falmouth put the extension of the Shining Sea Bikeway as a priority. We are working hard on the extension to the Cape Cod canal. Excited to work on the connection with Falmouth – a document has already been filed jointly by Falmouth and Bourne.
- Jane Perry:
 - Lived in Falmouth for 51 years, visually impaired woman who travels with a white cane. Member of Falmouth transportation commission, but tonight speaking as a citizen representing the visually impaired community. Rep at Mass Commission to the Blind is available to work with our committee on complete streets, but is retiring in March. Would like to put the following on the table:
 - On Route 6 and 28, there are very few bus shelters. The 2nd to latest one near the Schoolhouse apartments is back from the street, and there is no signage. All along the route 28 corridor there is a lack of bus shelters.
 - In conjunction with Davis Straits, there are 2 intersections. There is a crosswalk, however, as we look towards completing route 28 we need to emphasize the phase 2 sections – they have not been addressed at all in our town, and there are many issues there. We need audible pedestrian signals. These are some of my biggest

concerns. We need many more accessible audible pedestrian signals. Need to look at more intersections and retrofit them.

- Our aging population has the same right to access infrastructure, and its an ADA requirement to make the same reasonable accommodations for those who have disabilities
- Route 151, there was recently a death. I do not like roundabouts or split islands. They do not work for the visually impaired because there is not enough time to cross, and people do not yield.
- Some crosswalks do not have tactile warning strips, and some of the curb cuts do not meet the grade for the AAD regulations.
- The map you are showing is not accessible to the visually impaired.
- Scott Lindell:
 - Sent a map of central arteries they would like to see become more bicycle and pedestrian friendly. Also sent the bike plan updates to Colleen.
 - Their central focus is to link the schools, and the village centers and commercial districts. He has a map to share with the Commission.
 - Would love to see better coordination between the Steamship Authority buses and the CCRT. It's difficult to get the commuter bus from Hyannis down to Falmouth unless there was a connection – more coordination could help with this.
- Kathy Johnson:
- From East Falmouth, would like to add my street – Old Meeting House Road to this map as a consideration for either shared access for bicycles or a sidewalk. The South End of Old Meeting House where it intersects with Old Barnstable Rd already has sidewalks, but this side does not. It's one of the busiest roads in Falmouth because people use it as a cut through to avoid route 28, or to connect to 151 from 28, Most of the traffic travels at very high speeds, and it is very curvy and unsafe. Many bicycles travel down this street and they are not safe. The Cape Cod marathon also comes through here in the fall.
- Ed DeWitt:
 - There is no mention of our town policy on complete streets, and there are a number of elements in the town policy that are pertinent. One of the requirements of our own towns policy is that all transportation projects be examined for the feasibility of incorporating complete streets thinking into projects. So far, this has been dealt with by DPW, but to be successful, we need a community wide effort to integrate it. Our citizens have unique abilities to understand what is happening with transport in their neighborhoods. If we are looking at the priority plan as a way to get funding, we will never get to complete streets. We need to be thinking about CS in all things that we do.

- In terms of priorities I agree with Scott Lindell, and we need to prioritize safer routes to schools. We will enhance accessibility to villages themselves in addition to providing students with greater safety.
- Connectivity is the second priority, and the first place to look at this is the shining sea bikeway connecting to villages along the bikeway – such as north Falmouth, west Falmouth, downtown Falmouth, woods hole. Signage is poor, safe passage is poor, and we really need to concentrate on connectivity. In addition, we need to look at east west connections, and additional north south routes. We have a lot to accomplish in this bucket, some are simple, and some are more complex.
- Ralph Herbst: Educating the public is my biggest concern. Many bicyclists do not travel on the correct side of the street. Education, visual education, by spraying the rules on the pavement with a stencil would be low cost but a great improvement.
- Doug Brown: Selectman.
 - Thinking about previously or recently paved roads and whether they can be included. Bikeways Committee has long had a goal of an east west connection, but our complete streets program did not align well with our paved way work. I hope these roads are not excluded from the prioritization plan, because it would be a shame not to include them just because they were recently repaved.
 - Thomas Landers Rd is a great connection, there are many avid bikers traveling there regardless of the danger because it's a great connection. Its better than the Brick Kiln road because it takes you into the center of east Falmouth. It seems there is room to create shoulders, and it should be prioritized.
- Pamela Rothstein:
 - East West routes and safe routes to school are high on the prioritization list of the bikeways committee. Brick Kiln road is very dangerous. We have roads marked as potentials for multi-use paths. Wider shoulders and sidewalks are great, sandwich and Sippiwissett could use sidewalks.
 - But also, an east west corridor path, going through many of those wooded areas going through Thomas landers be phenomenal. It shouldn't be either or, but both. We have heard from people in Hatchville and East Falmouth that they want a sidewalk to be able to get to different ponds and other parcels. We need another multiuse path that connects these properties that allows people to commute and ride recreationally.
 - Also, in terms of connecting to the public so that they can advocate for this, we need to get into the schools, the senior centers, the village associations. Those people need direct outreach and collaboration to mobilize these communities.
- Lillia Frantin: Two areas of concern, and I live on Old Main Rd in North Falmouth Village



- On Old Main Road, I would like to see crosswalks raised, so that we are making it safer for pedestrians and to slowdown traffic. I wonder if this can be fit in with the repaving plan.
- Also would like improved lighting on Old Main Road. Many areas are very dark, and the sidewalks are in bad shape. Marston Mills has does this on Main Street, and it is a great solution for both drivers and pedestrians.
- I am also concerned about the intersection of Palmer and Main Street at the Village Green. Has been working with the traffic commission. The DPW did a great job restructuring/reforming the peninsula area in front of the village green area, but what's missing is still a safe way for drivers who are making a left hand turn onto main street. It is a very confusing and dangerous intersection. It requires a stop sign and stoplight. We also need crosswalks on either side of the village green.
- Scott Lindell: Agree with Lillia, and recommend raised crosswalks on Main Street as well.
 - Perhaps one-way traffic on Main Street or Kathy Lee Bates or both. The town considered this, but reversed their decision based on complaints from the main street vendors.
 - What is the precedent for pilot projects, to just try this for a season? Are there other examples we can point to for other towns that have tried this and then reversed it? Can towns do these things seasonally? Just make it a May – Sept. operation?
 - Idea to make Church Street to Noster Road a one-way loop. Very attractive place for bikers and pedestrians.
- Steve answered: political pushback is more of a challenge than technical feasibility of pilot / temporary or seasonal projects. But given COVID, there has been much more experimentation, and generally many pilot projects have been well received. So there are more success stories now, and it can be a great strategy to convince folks that this could be a good solution. However, doing one thing seasonally and one thing the rest of the year can violate driver expectation and we can run into issues into the changeover periods, so that strategy is used sparingly, but testing ideas as a strategy can be a good idea to consider.
- Question about how to rate the benefits. We are still figuring out the exact details about the ranking system and method, and we will communicate the details before the next phase.

Breakout Room 2

- Charlotte Harris, North Falmouth:
 - I'd like to point out that Allison Leschen and I served on the advisory committee for the rt. 28 complete streets project. The main concern was preservation of the residential character of the road. I would like to know, before moving forward, what the standards are for improvement. Where does preservation of the town character rank in the priorities here? It is one of the main priorities of the planning board, on which I serve, and of the comprehensive plan.
 - Here's how not to proceed with town character: Curley Blvd is very wide and has a bike lane painted on the road. If you think about it in terms of complete streets, it looks good, but it has turned it into a speedway. Widening a road tends to turn it into a speedway. On Curley, the bike lane is on the other side of the street, and it is only marked by paint. It is not safe.

- Allison Leschen:
 - I think the Curley Blvd example is a good example of where the roadway part that cars travel on is very wide, but the bike and pedestrian accommodations on that road are still not very good. I would love it if they would take several feet from the car lanes and turn them into protected bike and pedestrian lanes. Let's use that road width but shift the lines and the accommodations so that it's more skewed towards bikes and pedestrians and narrowing the car lane slows cars back down.
 - It would be helpful to back up before putting dots down. Connectivity was mentioned. What are destinations? What are our goals with this? I think it's important to look at the big picture first and think about what our big goal is.

- Rhona C.:
 - I've been concerned about whether there is ample space for people using wheelchairs or walkers. I haven't heard as much about people with a range of abilities. Complete streets emphasize bicycles, but what about other users? How do we give our input to make sure that you think about these things?
 - What will the changes mean for people who are accustomed to zooming down the sidewalk in their wheelchair? Will there be changes that will make it more difficult for people using wheelchairs?
 - I'm worried about the restaurants using the sidewalks and making it more difficult for people with wheelchairs.

Lev: Think about a journey you've made, not in your car, to get from Point A to Point B, and you just couldn't feel comfortable for the whole journey due to a missing sidewalk, lacking connectivity, etc.

- Mary Kay Browne:
 - Five years ago, with the bike plan, I learned about the difficulty people had going east to west. I go north/south all the time, but in fairness to our east/west residents, it would be great if you could talk about whether the Trotting Park route is still on the table. I would be excited about a path from Shining Sea to Mashpee Commons.
 - In terms of the goals that someone else mentioned, connectivity, safety, and encouraging people to use other modes of transit besides cars for daily trips would be important to me.
 - Should I be inputting the comments during this comment period? I was heartened hearing about the Goodwill Park flashing light project....People have difficulty crossing there. Kathy Lee Bates needs some sort of traffic calming. Have you considered a rumble strip on Palmer Road as people are coming south? People are often going very quickly there.

- Chris McGuire:
 - On the tool, will each user see what others have added, so we're slowly adding to the picture? Could we think about a way where each person could do a thumbs up? So, for example, the 151 idea that you put in there, that's something that's in the bike plan, and probably a lot of people would give a thumbs up. It might be worth thinking through how to capture that. If there isn't a thumbs up, could people add to comments in the comment box for that edit? I think it would be useful to think about how you're going to solve that problem and put [the solution] into the directions so that people know what to do.
 - I'm a member of the bicycle and pedestrian committee, and on the transportation management committee. One of the things we've talked a lot about are east/west connectors and safe connectors to school. Brick Kiln Rd is both. You could imagine a multi-use path on Brick Kiln Rd from the bike path all the way across to 28. Imagine another connector that would go all the length of Gifford St that you could connect to the bike path through Goodwill Park. That is close to destinations, including schools and parks. We've been trying to approach this in a tactical way, and creating a big X in the middle of town might be a good way to advance connectivity and safe routes to school. Both roads are already pretty wide.
 - To the point that Rhona made about other users, I think the bike committee supports separated pedestrian and bicycle access. Putting a painted bike lane on a road does not make users feel safe. If there is not a physical barrier between the cars and the other users, it is not safe or inviting. I am a parent. Parents would prefer a wide, separate path for kids to use. That's how the bicycle and pedestrian committee

has been thinking about that. In the bike plan, there are a lot of actions that we could add to this, but I wanted to share the big picture so that we could then add to that core.

Rhona C.: Is there land for the extra width of the road that we would need in order to provide safety? [That's unknown at this time. The minimum would be at least five feet.]

- Alison Leschen:
 - A lot times, if you really start looking at car travel lanes, many are much larger than they need to be. You need to look at the total amount of pavement and reallocate that. You slow down the cars and can accommodate other modes. Curley Blvd, Brick Kiln Rd, and Surf Dr are examples of opportunities for that. Recent paving projects have not taken accommodations into account, and that's frustrating. It's good to see all the town staff on this call. Our hope is that, whether through representation of the bike and pedestrian committee or the transportation committee on some complete streets oversight committee, to make sure that all modes are being considered by people doing these projects. At the beginning, this may feel piecemeal, but if we have a vision, as we move ahead, they will be connected together. My plea is that a raised consciousness comes out of this for the people doing these projects – every project that you do, pull all of us in, and have these priorities.

- Charlotte Harris:
 - State money usually comes along with state requirements. The state turned down what the Rt 28 committee recommended. When we're thinking about applying for anything, we should think about what the state might impose. They have wide requirements for separation between streets and sidewalks, how wide crosswalks have to be, etc. It would be good to put the state requirements out front so that we know what comes with taking their money. Or else, pretty soon Falmouth will look like a suburb outside of Boston. I appreciate what you're saying, but I really want to emphasize that the town always wants the state to pay for their projects, and you'll lose local control that way.

- Chris McGuire:
 - I fully agree with what Charlotte characterized as happening with the Route 28 project. Would the state be as involved in the design and planning of these projects? Answer: Yes, the state would expect the project to follow state guidelines and recommendations, however, the design details of the potential project would not to

be approved or reviewed in detail by MassDOT prior to construction. The MassDOT Tier 3 construction funding program is a reimbursement program. The Town is responsible for managing the design and permitting.

- Charlotte Harris:
 - You need to follow the money. The money is going to be federal, and there will be federal stipulations.

- Chris McGuire:
 - I think it's a good point that you want to understand the brackets that you're working with. As far as the project list, Mary Kay mentioned that in the development of the bike plan, we had a lot of public meetings and data collection. Lev knows that because he was a part of that project. As a committee we reviewed part of the project list. Many of them are still relevant, and we've keyed them into a spreadsheet that our chairman got from Colleen. I think that, as a list of projects, to be determined what the highest priority is, we are ready to share that. In terms of the tool, it might be worth going through and putting those projects in in advance of sending it out to everyone else.

- Mary Kay Browne:
 - I would appreciate if you did do that because I revisited the bike plan today, and it wasn't clear to me the status of the projects. It would be helpful to know the status of those.

- Chris McGuire:
 - The bike plan is probably badly named because there are something like four crosswalks within the top ten priorities. It's part of the reason that the town renamed the bike committee to the bike and pedestrian committee.

- Mary Kay Browne:
 - It might be worth looking at bike racks (like at the grocery store) and reminding people where they do exist so they know where they can bike.

- Chris McGuire:
 - We used CDBG funds to build some bike racks on public property and a few privately owned property, but you run into ownership challenges at grocery stores, for example.

- George Slade:
 - I'm from the town of Bourne, but I am observing very closely. We do have a lot of the issues that you have, and I hope to learn from these east/west connectors. We're interested in becoming mile 11.9 and connecting to the southern end of Canal Rd. I'm a selectman and on the bike way committee. We do have very similar challenges. I'm using this as a learning tool for myself. [CCC will be assisting Bourne with their plan in the end of February/beginning of March.]

- Chris McGuire:
 - You know that we have that ¾ mile extension to connect to Bourne through the Shining Sea bikeway. That project wouldn't fall into this program, but we're hoping to advance it. [George: We've been fast-tracking it on our end, too. Lev: Creating or extending multiuse pathways can be included in these plans.]

- Sean Polay:
 - Connecting to those off-road paths is certainly as important, too. It's important to connect neighborhoods, destinations, municipal facilities to paths.

- Chris McGuire:
 - I notice Brad Cole is here from the Falmouth Enterprise. Do you have any sense of when this tool might be available to the public? Would the tool be on the same CCC Falmouth complete streets webpage?
Answer: Yes, the tool will be available via the Falmouth Complete Streets webpage and we are hoping by the end of the week to have it available for public use.

- Chris McGuire: And you'll be accepting email recommendations for less spatially specific ideas? Answer: Yes, of course.