

Answering Questions about the Bike & Walkways Committee's Analysis of Alternative Bikeway Routes
Last updated on 1 May 2021 (initial upload on 17 February 2021)

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QE4: Who is going to have to pay for this if you don't take the MassDot \$6.8M that they have budgeted for the Route 6 – Main Street intersection project?

QE5: What will happen if MassDOT continues with its plan to build sidewalks and bike lanes on Main Street to Wicked Oyster? Is there a plan beyond that towards Wellfleet Center?

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The role of the Wellfleet Bike & Walkways Committee:

QA1: Who is the Bike & Walkways Committee, and what does it do?

A: The committee is a five-member volunteer ad hoc committee appointed by the Wellfleet Selectboard in an advisory capacity.

Specifically, the Committee is charged as follows:

- To work with the Cape Cod National Seashore, the Towns of Provincetown and Truro and the Cape Cod Commission to establish the continuation of the bike trail northward into Provincetown.
- To prepare a plan for future bike and walking routes throughout the town of Wellfleet.

The committee is conducting an analysis of potential cycling and walking routes in Wellfleet in accordance with its charge from the Selectboard. The committee's immediate focus is to identify (with public inputs) and then assess potential routes for a bikeway extension from the end of the State's Cape Cod Rail Trail, through Wellfleet, to Truro. The committee meets bi-weekly via a Zoom meeting link and encourages public participation and inputs.

QA2: What specific future pathway is the Bike & Walkways Committee proposing?

A: The committee is not proposing any specific future pathway, it is performing an analysis of all the alternative routes that have been proposed to it. We will deliver the analysis conclusions to the Selectboard after the analysis is complete in June 2021. That report will include the committee's recommendations based on the findings of the analysis.

QA3: Who will pick the bikeway route?

A: The decision of how to proceed will be made by the elected members of the Selectboard. The Selectboard has stated publicly its intention to engage the State and other stakeholder agencies after it receives the committee's report.

QA4: What is the need for a Wellfleet bikeway in the first place?

A: The DCR plans to end the Rail Trail in Wellfleet, not continue it further. The Cape Cod Commission strategic plan for the region proposes the need for bikeway route through Wellfleet that extends to Truro. The intension is to provide a safe and practical route for cyclists and pedestrians, with balanced emphasis on commuters, other purposive users, and recreational users.

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QA5: Didn’t the Cape Cod Commission’s Outer Cape Bike Plan already do what you are doing now?

A: The Outer Cape Plan recommended further study was required in Wellfleet. The committee is following up on that report’s recommendation for further study. Wellfleet presents a complicated situation, and we are performing a rigorous local study to determine sensible alternatives.

QA6: What is the committee’s timeline to complete the analysis of proposed routes?

A: The committee’s analysis timeline:

- December 2020 – April 2021: Conduct research,, stakeholder engagement, and public outreach to develop the analysis methodology and collect inputs on alternative routes for a bikeway through Wellfleet to Truro. The committee provided an analysis plan overview to the Selectboard on April 8, 2021.
- April – May 2021: Perform analysis of alternatives.
- June 2021: Report analysis results to the Selectboard.

QA7: How is the committee qualified to do the analysis?

A: The Selectboard appointed a committee with skill and knowledge sets to execute the study:

- Knowledge of biking and bike trails, with understanding both on-road and off-road local terrains, and knowing the issues that will arise – permissions, National Seashore limitations, preservation, abutters, etc.
- Knowledge of applicable guidance documentation.
- Knowledge and experience to work cooperatively with town, state, and federal agencies that are stakeholders for a Wellfleet bikeway.
- Research knowledge and experience to develop an analysis methodology using best technical practices.
- Analytic skills for gathering, storing, processing, analyzing, and presenting data.
- Knowledge and experience to coordinate with stakeholder agencies, communicate with the public, and provide a clear and effective reporting of the analysis outcomes.

QA8: What will happen after the analysis?

A: The Bike & Walkways Committee will make recommendations to the Selectboard based on its analysis performed with public inputs, inputs from stakeholder organizations, and full public transparency. The Selectboard will determine the town’s subsequent collaboration with the State and other external agency stakeholders to build

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consensus on a way forward, including the appropriate public hearings with state agencies presenting their plans to the public.

Alternative bikeway routes:

QB1: What alternative routes are being evaluated, who selected them, and why?

A: The committee's unbiased analysis looks at all alternatives proposed to the committee. We welcome route ideas from the public, Wellfleet Town Government, stakeholder agencies like the Cape Cod Commission, State agencies, neighboring towns, the Cape Cod National Seashore, and others.

QB2: Who has recommended the alternative routes the committee is looking at?

A: The route suggestions mostly come from the local public. Some alternatives are pulled from past planning reports by stakeholder agencies, including the Cape Cod Commission and the National Seashore. None of the route suggestions originated with committee members, and we are not playing favorites with the suggestions we receive. We treat the alternatives anonymously rather than by who proposed them. Each alternative will stand on its own merits as the committee scores the alternatives side by side in an unbiased analysis of their attributes, both good and bad.

QB3: What path alternatives are you eliminating from being considered in the analysis?

A: None. All the route ideas received will be evaluated using the same analysis criteria.

QB4: Some say the power lines are being considered but some say it's impossible because of Eversource and some private land ownership. Are the power lines feasible?

A: Respecting private property rights is an important objective of the analysis. Eversource interests are also a factor, and the committee has contacted Eversource for inputs. Proposals to use any sections of the power lines will be scored accordingly.

QB5: Are you talking with Truro about where the Wellfleet trail will end?

A: Yes, we are in discussions with the Truro Bike and Walkways Committee. We briefed them on February 8, 2021, provided them copies of our analysis game plan and draft methodology, the draft goals and objectives for the analysis. The Wellfleet Committee has requested the Truro Committee's inputs on the draft goals and objectives of the Wellfleet analysis, and we have discussed alternative end points in Truro. Collins Road and Route 6 appear to be two most likely candidates, and we are flexible in adding other endpoints when they are identified as candidates. Truro committee members have requested Wellfleet to consider how well an alternative route connects to the existing

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Claire Saltonstall Bikeway through Truro and Wellfleet on the bay side of the Cape, which is a consideration we will incorporate in our analysis.

QB6: Are you discussing the route alternatives with potential abutters?

A: Yes. Respecting private property interests is an important objective of our analysis scoring methodology, and we want to eliminate abutter “surprises.” We encourage inputs from potential abutters and have stated so in public meetings. All members of the public are invited to share ideas and concerns with the committee.

There are literally dozens of *potential* path segments to be assessed which span many miles, many of which might not be strong candidates for a bikeway route. When the analysis indicates which alternative routes are reasonable candidates, we will advise the Town Government to enact an abutter notification process.

Analysis scoring system:

QC1: How does the analysis scoring system work?

A: Based on research of guidance materials and other bikeway plans and studies, and influenced by local public inputs and stakeholder inputs, the analysis scoring system states five goals which comprehensively define the needs the Wellfleet route should meet. The goals are subdivided into eighteen objectives which mark specific progress toward satisfying those goals. Each of the eighteen objectives is comprised of measurable elements, which constitute sixty scoring criteria used to determine the weighted quantitative score each alternative receives.

QC2: What are the goals for a bikeway, who selected them, and why?

A: There are five goals for the bikeway extension through Wellfleet to Truro:

- 1) Safety
- 2) Practicality
- 3) User Experience
- 4) Conservancy
- 5) Connectivity

These synthesize the variously-worded primary goals most cited in bikeway consideration documents in Massachusetts, in other parts of the US, as well as around the world.

The Bike & Walkway Committee developed these goals to best reflect the vision of the Cape Cod bike trail stakeholder agencies. At the same time, the committee has captured input from the Town and citizens regarding what they are most concerned

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about, which adds local considerations to this local study and helps achieve a best-fit solution for Wellfleet.

QC3: Won’t a bikeway have bad repercussions for the National Seashore and/or Wellfleet Center?

A: Preventing these outcomes is an explicit part of the study’s Conservancy goal and related objectives, as are other similar concerns, like preventing any harm to the environment or to our cultural and historical places. With stakeholder inputs and public involvement too, the committee is using analysis scoring criteria that will expose whether an alternative route can cause such harm, and such routes will be scored worse. Routes that protect and promote their surroundings will score better.

QC4: What are some “best practices” you are employing in the analysis?

A: We began by following three principles advocated and followed by MassDOT and the Cape Cod Commission for evaluating alternatives:

- *Transparency* in all analysis efforts and communications.
- *Early Public Input* (from citizens and stakeholder organizations).
- *Objectivity* to eliminate any forms of bias.

We chose as our evaluation methodology the process used by almost every agency in the US and the world that had the task of picking the best bikeway alternative: setting out and prioritizing the goals and objectives for the best alternative, deriving criteria from the goals that could be used to evaluate the alternatives, and then applying these criteria in an objective way to each path to come up with a score for each to identify the best-scoring paths.

The committee’s analysis plan is designed to be:

- *Rigorous* – exhaustive, thorough, and accurate.
- *Comprehensive* – assessing all aspects of the alternative routes.
- *Detailed* – precise and careful.
- *Objective* – not influenced by personal opinions.
- *Systematic* – using a fixed methodology.

We are implementing several technical best practices, procedural and statistical in nature, to ensure that our analytic measures are meaningful, that the correct analyses can be applied to them, and to clarify the differences among paths tying for top place.

We are referencing federal, state, and local bikeway technical guidelines as we assess characteristics of alternative routes.

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We are applying “lessons learned” conclusions reported in other bikeway studies around the region, the US, and in Europe.

As one of many examples of “lessons learned,” some studies have noted that different bikeway types attract use by different population demographics (including age and gender). Such lessons can prove valuable when one is identifying the best set of solutions for a diverse population.

Successful analyses preserve traceability between analysis goals and evaluation criteria, thus guaranteeing the criteria reflect the goals.

Quantification and automatic computation are used to remove human error and bias.

Finally, we follow the best practice of full disclosure and clear presentation of the results to all interested parties, making it easy to understand which routes were considered, where they are, and what the alternatives’ qualifications are.

QC5: Will commuters (seasonal workers etc., who currently cycle along Route 6) have an option to get to and from work in town easily and safely?

A: Part of the stated objectives for the bikeway extension is that the routes will support users who are trying to reach a destination – not only workers, but students, shoppers, and the like. The path will accommodate sensible connections to Wellfleet Center, to commercial sites of interest, and to similar nearby destinations in the neighboring towns.

QC6: A lot of us wrote in or spoke up telling the State and the Town what we wanted to see, did you take that into account?

A: Yes, our study is guided by public input. We welcome public input at our bi-weekly meetings and by email at bikeandwalkways@wellfleet-ma.gov. We held a community forum on February 15, 2021 to receive public inputs regarding goals, objectives, and alternatives for a bikeway route through Wellfleet to Truro. We have reviewed previous public input sources including videos from the June 13, 2019 DCR public meeting and the March 10, 2020 DCR-DOT public meeting. We have also collected inputs from citizens’ written feedback to the State and to the Wellfleet Selectboard in 2019 and 2020 – over 80 pages of letters and emails.

QC7: Is the issue of overcrowding of our ponds being addressed in the scoring?

A: Yes, we have coordinated with the Wellfleet Beach Department, the Conservation Commission, the Town Health Agent, and the National Seashore to ensure the health of the ponds is addressed in the analysis and that the environmental and health concerns of those agencies are addressed.

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QC8: How will paths that require tree clearing be scored?

A: The best alternatives will require minimal tree clearing. Pathways that require clearing tracts of undeveloped forest will score poorly.

QC9: Will the trail disrupt wildlife?

A: Potential impact on wildlife is an important criterion for evaluating possible trails. The best alternatives will have minimal impact on natural habitats and wildlife.

Design and practicality issues:

QD1: Why does the bike path have to be paved - couldn't it be something else?

A: Yes, there are options for path surfaces other than pavement. Some believe other surfaces can better fit into the Wellfleet landscape than pavement. Many of the potential pathways are not currently paved, and their paving is not a consideration in their evaluation. The ongoing analysis is assessing alternative routes, not picking surface materials. Surface selection is a subsequent issue which will be determined by the appropriate agencies after a route is selected.

QD2: What kinds of users will be allowed on the bikeway?

A: The route will serve the user types served by the existing Cape Cod Rail Trail and other multi-use routes, including bikers of all skill levels, walkers and joggers, parents with small children, dog walkers, adolescents, walkers with visual or other disabilities, commuters and material transporters, and people in wheelchairs or other conveyances that enable people with disabilities to use the path. As on the Cape Cod Rail Trail, horseback riding could occur on the side of the bikeway.

QD3: Who will pay for/construct/maintain the bikeway and when?

A: Most of the answers to these important questions will depend on the bikeway route that is chosen. Practicality of building and maintaining the bikeway is a goal of the study, so unworkable routes will not score high in the analysis.

QD4: Will there be mile markers? Other features?

A: This is not part of the analysis of alternative routes, but yes, mile markers will presumably appear, similarly to how they appear on other Cape Cod bikeways. Other features will be determined in the design of the bikeway after the route is chosen, including but not limited to: Interpretive signs (historical or nature-related); scenic stop/rest areas with picnic tables; and port-a-potties at suitable points. The first

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objective is of course to pick a route which provides suitable conditions for those features -- the specific locations of such features will depend on the route chosen.

QD5: What if someone has an emergency on the trail and needs help?

A: Emergency vehicle accessibility is a consideration in the analysis of alternative routes. Path width and connectivity with roads are relevant factors.

Emergency phone locations along the route may be a design consideration after the route is selected, but emergency phone locations are outside the scope of the ongoing analysis of alternative routes. The proliferation of cell phones probably obviates the need (depending on cellular coverage, which will be assessed in our study). Note the analysis of alternatives will not use.

QD6: What about ADA compliance?

A: We want to achieve maximum accessibility for a trail that satisfies the collective goals of the Town and other stakeholder organizations. The committee has reviewed Federal and State documents to understand accessibility requirements, and our study will consider the factors necessary to achieve a safe, usable, and enjoyable bikeway. In consultation with the Cape Cod Commission, we have identified two fundamental features to consider for assessing alternative routes: path grade and path width.

Other ADA specifications are best addressed when a bikeway is designed in detail, not when the route is being selected. Whichever state organization plays the primary role in bikeway design will play a primary role in making necessary accessibility provisions.

QD7: What grade angle are you going for?

A: Our motivation is to identify an alternative route that optimizes safe and convenient use. The analysis observes the same grade guidance that was applied for the Cape Cod Rail Trail. The ideal angle of incline is 5 degrees or less, which is a standard commonly applied in MA, around the US, and internationally. Steeper angles can occur over short distances, as detailed in DCR trail design guidelines, and as already exist on the Rail Trail and similar off-road bikeways in the state. MassDOT, which typically builds bike lanes beside existing roadways, applies different grade standards. Although MassDOT states a 5 degree maximum grade, it exempts bike lanes alongside pre-existing roadways that are steeper than 5 degrees.

There are technical solutions available to reduce steep grades. These techniques have been applied successfully around the US and on the Cape Cod Rail Trail. There is a substantial body of well-documented work in this area. For example, two options: 1) stair-stepping a trailway to achieve grade-over-distance criteria; and 2) designing switchbacks in steep areas to achieve grade criteria. These two techniques (either alone

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or in combination) can achieve good outcomes on segments that might appear too steep at first glance.

QD8: How will it be paid for and will it increase taxes?

A: The choice of the bikeway route will suggest likely agencies to be involved in project funding. There is considerable interest stated in finally completing a bikeway the length of Cape Cod, so we expect State agencies have the motivation and jurisdiction to contribute significantly to the funding.

QD9: Is there going to be lighting on the trail?

A: Trail lighting is not widely used on Cape Cod bikeways and can be prohibitively expensive. Lighting can contribute light pollution, which is frequently stated as a public concern in Wellfleet. Lighting can also have impact on wildlife. At this time, the committee does not recommend trail lighting. In the future, low impact solar powered lighting might be possible. Meanwhile, we encourage bicyclists to use lighting options already available for night cycling, including bike headlights and taillights, along with other common safety items for night cycling, e.g. reflective clothing.

QD10: Will there be cellphone reception?

A: Yes, equal to what is already available in Wellfleet. Cell phone coverage is an evaluation criterion under our goals and objectives framework. We will be checking for coverage as we walk candidate routes, and we are also seeking coverage statements from signal carriers. Wellfleet has reasonable cellular coverage from the primary US carriers, even on its outermost beaches. Coverage is sometimes spotty in deep hollows away from roads. The fire roads and other trails which are suitable alternatives for hiking and cycling typically have good coverage.

QD11: How will the maintenance and plowing occur?

A: These issues will be determined mainly by which bikeway path is chosen and how it is constructed. Local precedents are set by the Cape Cod Rail Trail and other Cape Cod bikeways.

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Town and State:

QE1: Do the townspeople have any say, or can the State agencies do whatever they want in Wellfleet?

A: The Town Selectboard and Town Government have great authority to influence State agency projects in Wellfleet.

QE2: Is the Wellfleet committee wasting its time since the Cape Cod Commission in 2017 already checked out all the possible routes with their Master Plan?

A: The Cape Cod Commission's 2017 report recommended further study in Wellfleet. The committee is conducting that further study, and will report its findings to the Selectboard, which is the town's leadership in engaging the State.

QE3: Why is a Wellfleet analysis of alternatives necessary if the State has already planned a bikeway down Route 6 and Main Street?

A: The DCR and MassDOT bikeway plans leading to and along Route 6 and Main Street have met public opposition, primarily over safety concerns but also over concerns about adversely impacting the town's character. The Wellfleet Selectboard wrote to the Governor requesting the DCR plan be halted so alternative routes could be considered. The DCR has temporarily placed its plan on hold for the final Rail Trail phase and has deferred to Wellfleet to conduct feasibility studies of alternative routes. Public concerns regarding the MassDOT plans have not yet been addressed.

Alternative routes may provide a better solution than these State plans which have met strong local opposition. The committee's analysis will assess alternatives in comparison with the State's plans.

QE4: Who is going to have to pay for this if you don't take the MassDOT \$6.8M that they have budgeted for the Route 6 – Main Street intersection project?

A: MassDOT is an important bikeway stakeholder, and it is not clear that modification to their current Route 6-Main Street plan would be unwelcome or unfunded. We need to find the best bikeway alternatives and then present their merits to all the parties.

QE5: What will happen if MassDOT continues with its plan to build sidewalks and bike lanes on Main Street to Wicked Oyster?

A: If the State continues with its plan to 're-construct' Route 6, it will also 're-construct' the first 450 feet of East Main Street. The paved Main Street corridor will be widened approximately 17 feet. The marsh-side edge of the street will remain where it is now, and the road corridor will be widened toward the properties along the opposing side

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(the north side). Two five-foot shoulder/bike lanes will be added, one on each side of Main Street, along with raised curbs and a five-and-½ foot wide sidewalk will be added to the north side of the road. The centerline of the street will shift substantially toward the abutting properties to the north. The result will be a straightened, wider east Main Street that eliminates commercial, gallery, and restaurant parking at the historic properties on East Main Street, as well as all the roadside trees on the north side. The intersection, already congested, will be designed to attract bicycle and pedestrian traffic, even though the bike lanes and sidewalk will end at the Wicked Oyster and go no further.

The Town Government has not requested MassDOT change its plans for Main Street, so the MassDOT plan for reconstructing East Main Street is proceeding unchallenged and unchanged.

QE6: Some on the Selectboard keep saying the State can do what they want. Is that true, and if so, what is the point of the Bike and Walkways committee working on an alternative to the State's plans?

A: The elected Selectboard can play an important role influencing State decisions in Wellfleet. The committee seeks to strengthen the Selectboard's position in dealing with the State by providing a strong study of alternative bikeway routes.

Ongoing DCR work:

QF1: What is the current position of DCR with respect to ending the Rail Trail at Route 6?

A: The DCR Commissioner wrote to the Wellfleet Selectboard that DCR will temporarily halt its Rail Trail extension project at the Wellfleet Hollow Campground. In his letter to the Select Board dated September 24, 2020, with respect to extending the Cape Cod Rail Trail from Wellfleet Hollow Campground to a new terminus on Route 6, the DCR Commissioner wrote, "We have placed those plans on hold at this time." Regarding alternative routes, the DCR Commissioner wrote, "While we appreciate your desire to explore alternative shared-use pathway routes..." DCR "would defer any feasibility studies to the Town and other parties," hence the analysis the Wellfleet Bike & Walkways Committee is undertaking with inputs from the public and others.

QF2: How is the DCR's South Wellfleet work connected to the Bike & Walkways Committee?

A: The Bike & Walkways Committee did not have any part in DCR's work at the South Wellfleet parking lot or the Rail Trail from that point to the Wellfleet Hollow Campground. As with the rest of the community, we were surprised to see how much tree clearing took place. Public meetings we attended, in which the DCR presented its plans, never suggested the amount of clearing that occurred. We also learned that abutters were not consulted on the design or how it would affect their property.

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QF3: Did the Bike & Walkways Committee address the recent curb cut issue at South Wellfleet?

A: Yes, the committee wrote to the Selectboard on April 7, 2021, expressing concern that private property rights of way seem not to have been addressed early or clearly in the case of the Blakely property. The committee upholds the principle of preserving access to private property. One of our criteria for scoring alternative routes is, *"The path does not remove the sole means of access of a private property owner to or from their property."*

QF4: Why is the DCR clearing the Amsler property if it is pausing Rail Trail work at the Campground?

A: The Bike & Walkways Committee is concerned the DCR is clearing the property to serve as the Rail Trail terminus parking lot at Route 6, which the public opposed in Article 44 of the 2019 Annual Town Meeting and which the Selectboard opposed in its 2020 letter to the Governor and the DCR Commissioner.

The committee wrote to the Selectboard on March 26, 2021, requesting the Selectboard immediately contact the DCR Commissioner to verify the lot would not be cleared. The DCR demolished the Amsler house six days later.

QF5: Who is the town liaison to the DCR for Rail Trail matters?

A: The DCR regards its liaison with Wellfleet to be with the Selectboard, the Town Administrator, and other departments which comprise the professional Town Government. The State does not coordinate with or inform the Bike & Walkways Committee regarding State projects.