

Salem Bike Path Committee

FY09 Annual Report

July 1, 2008 — June 30, 2009



View of Canal Street Entrance into the Salem Bike Path



City of Salem, Massachusetts

Salem Bike Path Committee FY09 Annual Report

In June 2006, the City of Salem established the Salem Bike Path Committee, which is a Committee dedicated to making Salem a bike-friendly community. The main goal of this Committee is to make Salem a more-desirable urban environment by establishing safe and well planned on- and/or off-road bike routes for walking and cycling. Objectives of the Committee are to assist in the expansion of the existing bike path throughout Salem and to our surrounding communities, encourage the Safe Routes to Schools Program, advocate for alternative forms of transportation to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality, advocate for bike safety, and encourage cycling both as a form of alternative transportation and as a form of exercise and better health.

The Salem Bike Path begins on Lafayette Street directly opposite the entrance to the Town of Marblehead Recreational Trail. In fact, when the City obtained funds from Mass Highway to design, engineer, and construct the bikeway, it had been referred to as the Marblehead Branch Bike Path until 2006 when the City officially renamed it the Salem Bike Path. The existing Salem Bike Path (Phase I) is constructed on an abandoned Railroad Right-of-Way (formerly Boston & Maine Railroad ROW). The path begins at the Lafayette Street entrance near the City of Salem and Town of Marblehead line, and continues north approximately 2,500 linear feet alongside the Salem State College Central Campus toward Loring Avenue. Opposite Loring Avenue the bike path continues north approximately 450 linear feet to Canal Street. In its entirety, the existing Salem Bike Path (Phase I) is roughly 3,000 linear feet in length. The City and the Bike Path Committee are committed to extending the Salem Bike Path to Downtown Salem (Phase II is currently being planned) and future off-road extensions throughout Salem and our neighboring communities.

The Salem Bike Path Committee meets regularly on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00pm in Salem City Hall Annex, Meeting Room 314, 120 Washington Street. The Committee did not meet during the months of August 2008 and March 2009.

During the 2009 fiscal year period, the Salem Bike Path Committee Membership included Stan Franzen (Chairman until 10/22/08), Dan Shuman (Chairman since 12/10/08), Jeff Bellin (Vice Chairman until 12/10/08), David Pelletier, Nancy Sachetti, Jerry Judge, Christine Michelini, Rachel Hunt, and William Peck (appointed to Committee on 10/22/09).

Some of the Salem Bike Path Committee's key initiatives completed during the 2009 fiscal year were as follows:

- **Extension of the Salem Bike Path (Phase II)** — The City and the Committee have made great progress in planning the extension of the Salem Bike Path to Downtown Salem. The City has continued negotiations with the MBTA to enter into a long term lease agreement to extend the Salem Bike Path through a stretch of MBTA property. The City Engineer has added the extension of the Salem Bike Path into the roadway reconstruction plan for Canal Street. Coupled with the adjacent Town of Marblehead Recreational Trail, the completion of the bike path extension would connect downtown Salem to downtown Marblehead via an entirely off-road trail.

- **City of Salem Bicycle Circulation Master Plan** — The City entered into a Consultant Service Contract with Fay, Spofford, and Thorndike Engineering (FST) on March 11, 2009 to assist the Committee in putting together a citywide bike circulation master plan. The Plan will include building upon the significant progress the Committee has made during the past three years, recommend phased measures to improve the bike commuting and recreational environment, and provide sound broad-based technical recommendations for future decisions on creating or improving bike circulation facilities.

Aside from creating and/or extending off-road bike facilities (Salem Bike Path or Mountain Biking Trails) this plan will also identify on-road biking facilities. At this time, bicycle travel is permitted on all of Salem's City Streets open to motor vehicle use. This plan will indicate where bicycle travel is encouraged to enhance both local and regional connections. Ultimately, the plan will prioritize all the different types of bike facilities and suggest implementation strategies.

The Committee has confirmed the master plan scope and progress by FST Consulting Engineers has begun. During this fiscal year the Committee has started identifying all the potential on- and off-road biking facilities and the Consultants have been performing engineering studies on all the proposed on-road routes identified to date, to determine whether each road is wide enough to accommodate a bike lane or bike sharrow and they have begun ranking each road based on how heavily travelled it is and how safe it is.

PEDALING FORWARD >>>

Some of the major initiatives the Salem Bike Path Committee is currently working on and/or looking to complete in fiscal year 2010 are as follows:

- **Extension of the Salem Bike Path (Phase II) >>>** The City and the Committee will continue their efforts in executing the long-term lease agreement with the MBTA. Once the MBTA's property is under the City's control, engineers working on the Canal Street roadway improvement project will begin designing, engineering, and permitting the bike path extension.
- **City of Salem Bicycle Circulation Master Plan >>>** The City anticipates that the Bicycle Circulation Master Plan will be completed by December 2009. Following the completion of the master plan, the Committee will begin implementing the goals and recommendations of the plan, specifically constructing the Priority Bike Route (formerly known as the Green Line Bikeway) identified in the master plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank Taormina
Planner/Harbor Coordinator