

**Long Pond Road Environs
Claire Saltonstall Memorial Bikeway
Safety and Combined Use
January 2012**

A section of Long Pond Road borders the neighborhoods of Plymouth Estates and an area commonly referred to as Six Ponds. In addition, Long Pond Road is connected to or accessed from major feeder roads from other nearby neighborhoods and from highways.

These neighborhoods are unique in that many of the residences are on wooded lots bordering ponds, conserved greenways, conservation lands and cranberry bogs. The Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts will soon relocate to the Davis Douglas Farm on Long Pond Road, positioning the Trust close to its largest conservation holdings.

Over the years, these neighborhoods have seen a significant increase in traffic volume, speed and noise, which have endangered residents, overloaded existing roads and diminished quality of life.

Long Pond Road and its connecting roads are categorically unsafe, by any standards, for pedestrians, runners and cyclists. There are no pedestrian ways, crosswalks, dedicated lanes or paths for cyclists, or proper traffic signage. Blind drives, curves, narrows and obscured connecting roads are common features which do not deter speeding drivers. It is self evident that further development will exacerbate these problems.

Given the current situation, there are a number of points which need to be emphasized. These point are supported by information presented in several attached documents.

- The traffic studies completed by the Old Colony Planning Council in 2009, 2010 and 2011 provided data substantiating heavy and increasing traffic. The most recent traffic volume count was 10,019 vehicles per weekday.
- In 2007 A.D. Makepeace completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for its Wareham Road Project. Based on a re-analysis of some data in the report we estimate that there will be a 58.8% increase in traffic from that development project and that at peak hours the increase could be as high as 73%.
- Long Pond Road is an integral component of the Saltonstall Bikeway, designated by the Commonwealth in 1978. However, the bikeway is hazardous because there are no bike lanes or appropriate signage anywhere on Long Pond Road. Despite the traffic hazards, Long Pond Road remains in continual use by cycling group trips and for many cycling events. Moreover, the entity responsible for maintaining the Bikeway is unclear.
- While A.D. Makepeace intends to make "traffic calming" modifications to Long Pond Road, so far there is no indication that such modifications would be designed to make things better or safer for pedestrians, runners or cyclists.
- Cyclists and pedestrians have equal protection under current Massachusetts laws. People cycling on Long Pong Pond Road have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers regarding road use. Likewise, residents along Clark Road, Halfway

Pond Road, Bourne Road, and other feeder roads have rights to protection, safety and preservation of their quality of life. Any and all plans for development or road maintenance must include consideration of these rights.

- Once A.D. Makepeace and the Town start developing plans for "traffic calming" modifications to Long Pond Road, there should be opportunities for residents, cyclists and others to provide input. Recently, A.D. Makepeace has been surveying portions of Long Pond Road, but, as far as we know, no specific plans have been discussed with the public. For example, we think that plans offered by A.D. Makepeace and the Town should include accommodating the Saltonstall Bikeway and should be discuss with the public.
- It appears that "traffic calming" modifications on Long Pond Road from Halfway Pond Road to Clark Road would presuppose setting aside the "85% rule" which is often used to justify increasing speed limits. We think it would be good to set this aside along this stretch of Long Pond Road.
- Enforcement of existing traffic laws along Long Pond Road is periodic and inconsistent, and therefore ineffective. Excessive speeding is pernicious, dangerous and unchecked. The OCPC studies suggest that this issue will continue unabated. Traffic accident data from 2005 to 2010 indicate an unacceptable increase in motor vehicle accidents. Casual observation confirms an increased frequency of incidents requiring fire, police and emergency vehicles. Effective "traffic calming" measures should help to alleviate this problem.
- It appears that Long Pond Road and other neighborhood roads may be getting used by commuters from the south as an alternative way to get between Route 3 and Route 6 thereby further burdening this road system. It has been observed that Long Pond Road is also being used for through trucking by large commercial trucks, including 18 wheelers, some traveling at night. The Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, (MUTCD) Massachusetts Amendments for Streets and Highways contains standards adopted by the Federal Highway Administrator as a National Standard for application on all classes of highways. This provides advice and guidance for towns and cities, in conjunction with state agencies, to make decisions regarding road use, design and traffic. Such vehicles may be excluded under MUTCD provisions when "volume of heavy commercial vehicles, which usually is in the range of five (5) to eight (8) percent, reduces the utilization of the facility and is cause for a substantial reduction in capacity or safety." OCPC small sample 48 hour studies showed heavy vehicle use of 8.7% in 2009, 5.4% in 2010, 4.0% in 2011. These statistics warrant heavy vehicle exclusion.
- The accumulation of trash along all of these roads is a disgrace. The twice-annual volunteer efforts to remove trash are a futile exercise. Dumping/throwing trash, including home demolition debris, on private property and on conserved land has become a common practice by those traversing our neighborhood. Increased traffic volume will certainly increase trash. The clean up volunteers work at serious risk of injury.
- Cycling, bikeways and walking trails should, without reserve, be supported and endorsed as an asset to the community, to quality of life and to health. Collaboration by Town Hall, state officials and citizens is critical. Children should be able to walk to school safely. Culturally, by virtue of our street and road

designs, which accommodate the automobile only, we have become imprisoned in our cars to our detriment and that of our communities.

The Old Colony Planning Council and the Old Colony Bicycle and Pedestrian Task Force are encouraging community officials and planners to participate in the Complete Streets Program

The Complete Streets Team has over 45 years of combined professional traffic engineering and transportation planning experience for a wide variety of traffic, bicycle and pedestrian design and planning projects.

- Recommended attendees include: Mayors, Town Managers, Department Directors & their key team members, Local Zoning, Health and Planning Board members, Private Consultants (Engineers, Planners, Landscape Architects, Attorneys), Educators and Public Health Professionals.

Baystate Roads is offering two Complete Streets Introductory Programs in the Old Colony region this coming month:

1. January 11, 2012 (9am – 12pm) at Jordan Hospital
Funkhouser Conference Room, 275 Sandwich Street, Plymouth, MA
2. January 26, 2012 (9am – 12pm) at the Old Colony Planning Council
70 School Street, Brockton, MA

These workshops are free of charge and open to the public. The class size is limited to 30 attendees and registration is required. To register, click on the link “register now” in the email below or visit <http://baystateroads.eot.state.ma.us/>

Old Colony Planning Council Surveys

Phase I: Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study

The regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity and Livability Study is intended to establish a strategic vision for improving walking and bicycling opportunities in the Old Colony Region. This strategic vision will feed into the Old Colony Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO’s) overall Regional Transportation Plan and provide the basis by which future funding priorities of the MPO are established for bicycle and pedestrian accommodations within Abington, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, Easton, Halifax, Hanson, Kingston, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Stoughton, West Bridgewater, and Whitman.

Phase II: This will consist of an in-depth analysis of the existing infrastructure conditions collected during phase-one. This process will be followed by a project-by-project prioritization. A list of bicycle and pedestrian short and long term infrastructure projects will be provided at the end of phase-two.

Long distance bike routes to be analyzed include:

- The Claire Saltonstall Bikeway, 135 miles long, from the Charles River Bikeway to Provincetown.
- The Bay Circuit Trail (BCT), 200 miles long recreation trail connecting parks, open spaces, and waterways in eastern Massachusetts. First proposed in 1929 as an outer "emerald necklace," the route stretches from Plum Island in Newburyport on the North Shore to Kingston Bay, traversing 50 cities and towns. Approximately 150 miles of the trail have been completed. The BCT varies in surface type, from earthen hiking trails to paved shared-use trails.

Recreational Bike trails to be analyzed include:

- The Seaside Bike-Rail Trail in Plymouth is a 1.5 mile long facility that runs parallel to the Plymouth seashore between Hedge Road (just south of Cordage Park) and Nelson Street (just north of Downtown Plymouth) at the Nelson Street Recreation Area.
- The Myles Standish State Forest in Plymouth and DW Field Park in Brockton and Avon also offer miles of paved bike paths.
- The Ames Nowell State Park in Abington offers mountain biking trails.
- The Borderland State Park in Easton provides both paved bike paths and mountain bike trails.

Phase III: Identifying and implementing with local, state and federal funding.

The Federal Surface Transportation Program Dec 2011

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/fundrec.htm>

The FHWA(Federal Highway Administration) is the largest single source of funding for shared use paths, trails, and related projects in the United States. Before 1991, Federal highway funds could be used only for highway projects or specific independent bicycle transportation facilities. Now, [bicycle transportation and pedestrian projects and programs](#) are eligible for nearly all major Federal highway funding programs. Recreational trails are eligible under the [Recreational Trails Program](#).

A \$250,000 grant via OCPC will be awarded in \$50,000 allotments to Massachusetts towns for the purchase of bike parking devices, to be installed at town expense.

The Begich Amendment.

This is a pro-biking amendment in the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which passed the committee with unanimous bipartisan support on 12/13/11. The amendment requires states to accommodate all users of roads on federally funded projects. It must pass 2 more Senate committees, the Senate and the House to become law.

Baystate Greenway Implementation

<http://www.dot.state.ma.us/common/downloads/BayStateGreenway.pdf>

The Mass DOT is committed to promoting bicycling as an important transportation to help reduce emissions and support a healthy lifestyle, and is prioritizing implementation of the Bay State Greenway Network (BSG). Mass DOT has completed 23 shared use projects since 2007 involving 45 miles of trails and roads at a cost of \$39 million. Other initiatives and policies are the Green DOT Policy, Complete Streets, The Healthy Transportation Compact, Vision for Bicycling in Massachusetts, the Transportation Enhancement program. See above link for details.

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