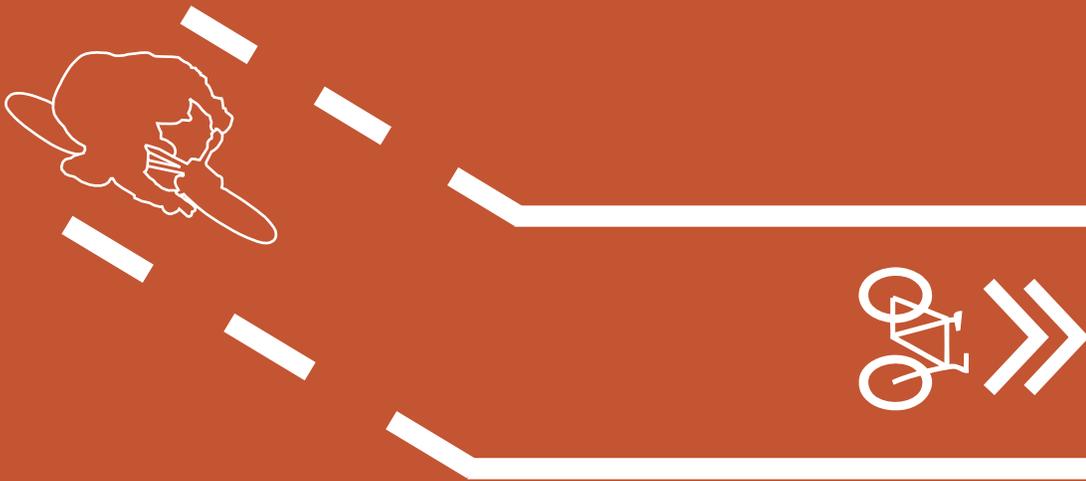


# Handlebar Survey Report

An Assessment of Bicycling Conditions for:  
South Kingstown, Rhode Island  
10/7/11







*The Handlebar Survey Team: From left, Beth Very, Teresa Tanzi, Vin Murray, Mike Lydon, and Doug McLean.*

## SUMMARY

The Handlebar Survey gathers qualitative and quantitative information regarding existing cycling conditions. The Street Plans Collaborative worked with the GrowSmart Rhode Island Healthy Places by Design team and local stakeholders to collect data and identify existing opportunities and barriers for improving bicycling conditions in South Kingstown. The Survey was completed by each group member by cycling portions of the Town. The information collected includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Current Bicycle and Pedestrian demand
- The sense of comfort and safety felt while cycling different streets
- Extant street widths and types/characteristics

(rural, sub-urban, village)

- Pedestrian and bicycle network gaps
- Signalized intersections
- Posted and actual vehicular speeds
- Land use characteristics
- Open space and regional connections
- Public transportation options/bicycle integration
- Bicycle parking supply/demand
- Bicycle parking type, location, and quality
- Pedestrian and bicycle trip generators
- Existing pedestrian and bikeway infrastructure
- Interactions between motor vehicles, pedestrians, and bicyclists
- Safe/unsafe routes, per existing data, interviews, and other qualitative information gathered during the Handlebar Survey
- Wayfinding amenities



*The first Handlebar Survey route began and ended at the South Kingstown Town Hall. Segments of High Street, Main Street, Belmont Avenue, Highland Avenue, O'Neill Bike Path, Railroad Street, and Kingstown Road were utilized.*

## **THE HANDLEBAR SURVEY**

From rural, sub-urban, and compact village centers, the Handlebar Survey team explored South Kingstown and found a variety of built and natural conditions that make bicycling both enjoyable and difficult.

### **Strengths**

The historic, compact scale of Wakefield and Peace Dale villages provide great social, cultural, recreational, and economic benefits to all South Kingstown residents. The two villages, with their connected street networks and mixture of workplace, retail, housing, civic land uses allows bicycling and walking to be practical modes of transportation because many destinations may

be reached efficiently without using a car.

To this last point, the importance of the O'Neill Bike Path cannot be underestimated. It is a recreational and transportation amenity that not only provides a critical non-motorized link between the two villages, it offers a connection to many destinations throughout South County, including Newport to the east, and an Amtrak station to the west.

Further south in Matunuck Beach, lower traffic volumes, recreational opportunities and scenic viewsheds offer an attractive environment for cycling, especially during the warmer months.



*The second Handlebar Survey route began at Matunuck Beach and included segments of Matunuck Beach Road, US-1, Pond Street, Main Street, and High Street before ending at the South Kingstown Town Office.*

### **Weaknesses**

Barriers to increasing bicycling and walking trips in South Kingstown include occasionally poor pavement conditions (such as High Street); a visible lack of adequate bicycle parking in the village centers and at other known destinations; the need for connected context-appropriate on-street bikeways; and the absence of wayfinding and safety signs, save for those streets intersecting the O'Neill Bike Path. Additionally, Dale Carla Corners is hostile to those not traveling in an automobile. Limiting the future growth of such auto-centric land use patterns, and retrofitting those areas that do exist presently to be more human-scaled, would provide long term economic and active transportation benefits.

### **Opportunities**

The Handlebar Survey revealed a range of comfort levels for each participant. More confident cyclists tend to be more comfortable sharing roadway space with people driving, whereas less experienced or more risk-averse cyclists prefer more space and separated facilities, like the O'Neill Bike Path. While bike paths cannot be built everywhere, a network of various bikeway types may be incrementally developed to make cycling more comfortable for all users. Additionally, low-cost opportunities such as adding bicycle parking facilities and wayfinding signs at key junctures could make the network more transparent and welcoming. This would be most helpful for visitors and more timid cyclists.



*Numerous pothole patches make for a bumpy ride along stretches of High Street.*



*The highly visible and attractive crosswalk at the intersection of High Street and Main Street features a nice pedestrian refuge area.*



*The lack of on-street parking creates more space for cycling, but may work against other goals, such as reducing vehicular speeds.*



*On-street parking can make less experienced cyclists uncomfortable. Shared use lane markings may help all 'share the road.'*



*Stormwater grates should be designed so as to not trap bicycle wheels. The grate seen here is acceptable.*



*On-street parking and narrow pavement keeps speeds very low on Belmont Avenue, a "yield-street" that is comfortable for most users.*



*The O'Neill Bike Path crossing could be made more visible to people driving, and more inviting for people walking and bicycling.*



*Stedman's Bike Shop is a community institution and located within blocks of the O'Neill Bike Path.*



*Main Street is the heart of Wakefield Village and therefore should become as welcoming to bicyclists as possible.*



*Located adjacent to Main Street, this "wave" bicycle rack is one of the only such amenities in Wakefield Village. More racks should be added.*



*The O'Neill Bike Path is a tremendous community asset.*



*Transitioning to on-street segments of the O'Neill Bike Path could be marked more clearly for bicyclists.*



*Flashing warning signs directed at motorists and path users improve safety at the intersection of Railroad Street and Kingstown Road.*



*A series of public art installations along a path segment in Peace Dale contributes to the village's unique sense of place.*



*This archway is both an exit and a gateway to the public art strewn bike path segment in Peace Dale.*



*The addition of bicycle racks on all buses allows RIPTA to provide intermodal transit access throughout Rhode Island.*



*Additional bike racks should be added to the Peace Dale village streetscape.*



*Peace Dale village is a bike-friendly environment that provides numerous amenities within a compact area.*



*In addition to flashing warning signs, pavement markings indicate the Paul O'Neill Bike Path/Railroad Street crossing in Peace Dale.*



*The ongoing redevelopment of the historic Peace Dale Mill complex will add further to the village's vibrancy and sense of place.*



*Bicycle access to Village Green, which is surrounded by historical, cultural and civic amenities, should be improved.*



*A small vertical stone marks the historic intersection at Dale Carla Corners.*



*Once a quiet country corner, Dale Carla Corner is now dominated by automobiles, making walking and bicycling uncomfortable.*



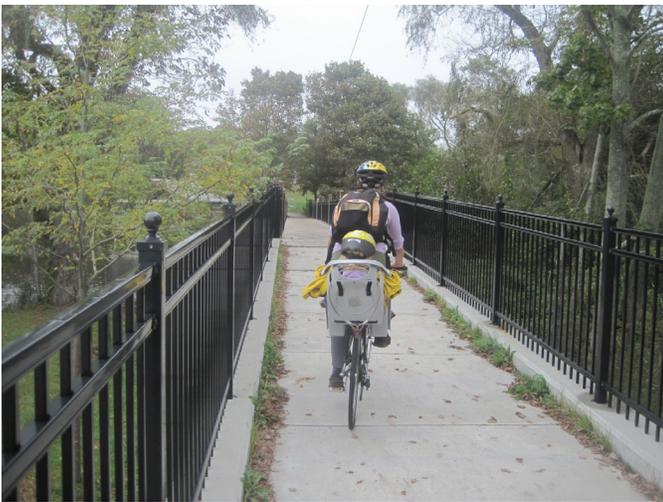
*The intersection of Main Street and Woodruff Avenue marks the entrance to Wakefield's village center.*



*Town and country meet at the Saugatucket Falls in Wakefield Center.*



*The pedestrian walkway along the Saugatucket River provides a fantastic recreational and social amenity to residents and visitors.*



*This bridge provides a critical connection between Saugatucket Park/Wakefield Elementary School and the Wakefield village center.*



*The addition of ADA-compliant pedestrian/bicycle ramps would improve safety and access to Saugatucket Park.*



*ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps and sidewalk upgrades are needed at this well-marked crosswalk near Wakefield Elementary School.*



*Matunuck's Seaview Market is in need of high-quality, visible bicycle parking.*



*Even in poor weather, bicycling is a practical way to get around Matunuck Beach.*



*Farms along Matunuck Beach Road enhance the corridor's rural character and offer destinations to which people may bicycle.*



*Bicycle-based public art on this fence enhances adds character to Matunuck Beach Road.*



*For experienced bicyclists, a wide shoulder along Route 1 mitigates the discomfort caused by high motor vehicle travel speeds.*



*Farmstands create destinations worth bicycling to along Route 1/Post Road.*



*Share the Road signs and Shared Use Lane markings could improve conditions along Pond Street, a narrow residential thoroughfare.*



