

**MDI Tomorrow Bicycle/Pedestrian Group
Meeting Notes, May 19, 2003
Basement of the Swan Building, Bar Harbor, 4:15 P.M. – 5:45 P.M.**

Attendance: Heather Albert-Knopp, Stephanie Clement, Charlie Jacobi, Alice M. Long, Marla Major, Doug Michael, Mollie Phemister, Zack Steele, Don Straus

1. Introductions

Doug facilitated the meeting. The goal of the session was to review the results of the bicycle/pedestrian sessions of the April 12th MDI Tomorrow conference and combine these with the work of the MDI Tomorrow issue-based groups (e.g., transportation, community health, etc.) to develop a list of potential strategies to improve bicycle and pedestrian access and safety on MDI.

Those in attendance introduced themselves and their reasons for attending the meeting.

2. Outcomes

Doug asked committee members to review the list of potential outcomes (below) and asked if anyone wanted to add outcomes or change those that were already listed.

1. Improved pedestrian/bicycle access to Acadia National Park from village centers
2. Safer pedestrian and bicycle access to schools by children
3. Better availability of schools and other public facilities for residents' winter activities
4. Increased accessibility for active living and participation in our communities and in Acadia National Park by persons with physical disabilities
5. Changes in municipal policy and procedures supportive of active community environments
6. Increased community collaboration in support of active community policies and environments
7. Heightened public awareness of the public health benefits of active living design
8. We want MDI to be safe for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Don asked if anyone had thought about limiting bicycles on the carriage roads to certain routes and/or providing bicycle-parking facilities near trailheads and carriage road entrances to reduce hiker/bicyclist conflicts. He also wondered if anyone had thought about developing bicycling opportunities around the park to help reduce pressures on the carriage roads.

Mollie said that perhaps fast bicyclists should be encouraged to take the Park Loop Road rather than the carriage roads.

Charlie reported that research has shown that numbers of visitors and problem behaviors on the carriage roads are below the upper limits as established in the carrying capacity study. Charlie added that the Park Loop Road can accommodate more bicyclists, but some areas are difficult, especially the two-way section. Charlie wondered if the committee should revise the first proposed outcome to include connections not just from village centers, but also among neighborhoods and within developments.

Heather pointed out that the outcomes mention access to schools by children, but commuters are also important and should not be forgotten.

Marla mentioned that we might want to add an outcome related to the East Coast Greenway/Sunrise Trail – that the proposed route brings people near Acadia and could be a source for bicycle tourism in the area, but the bicycling conditions are unsafe.

Charlie asked if the group wanted to include equestrians in their considerations and strategies. Doug said equestrian issues weren't suggested by any of the issue groups leading into the process. Committee members felt that we should stick to bicycle and pedestrians for now.

3. Ongoing Efforts

Stephanie read the list of ongoing efforts that were brainstormed during the April 12th conference. Committee members added the following to the list of ongoing projects:

- A group in Tremont is working on trail development around the Tremont school.
- All towns are working on their comprehensive plans, and it might be a good time to incorporate bicycle and pedestrian improvements.
- Southwest Harbor is working on developing/maintaining rights of way to the shoreline to ensure public access to the water.
- MDI Tomorrow is on the agenda of the MDI League of Towns every month.

4. Revised List of Possible Outcomes and Strategies

The committee reviewed the list of strategies for each outcome, and revised them to the following (revisions are in italics):

1. Improved pedestrian/bicycle access to Acadia National Park from village centers and among neighborhoods and communities.

- A. Add bicycle capacity to the Island Explorer, *including exploring the possibility of a dedicated bus and bike trailer for carrying people to the carriage roads.*
- B. Have bicycle rentals available at Schoodic, at carriage road entrances, etc. – places where people will be biking.
- C. Build educational bikeways – bikeways that also have interpretation.
- D. Build a bicycle lane or trail between the Hulls Cove visitor center and the Crooked Road – solves problem of people coming from the Park Loop Road and turning left onto Rt. 3 (unsure if they want to go against traffic or cut across three lanes to go with the traffic).
- E. Work with the bike shop owners to run bike rentals through the hotels and cottages.
- F. *Develop an MDI “community bikes” program modeled after the COA example – have bicycles parked at locations around MDI for anyone to use.*
- G. *Build bicycle lanes and trails.*

2. Safer pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, community centers, churches, etc. by children

- A. Long-range plan – focus on building bicycle *lanes/trails* to the high school.

- B. More/better signage – “Share the Road”
- C. Focus on education – let folks understand what it is like to be a cyclist.
- D. Hold bike rodeos/work in the schools to encourage kids to bicycle (Saco and Biddeford have good programs).
- E. *Build bicycle lanes and trails to elementary schools.*
- F. *Introduce information on how to drive safely around bicycles into local drivers’ education curricula.*
- G. *Bring Bicycle Coalition of Maine programs to MDI schools*

3. Better availability of schools and other public facilities for residents’ winter activities

- A. *Investigate the demand for these kinds of programs at the schools and community centers (Apparently, the YMCA has a once-a-week program for seniors in winter, and the high school is considering similar programs).*

4. Increased accessibility for active living and participation in our communities and in Acadia National Park by persons with physical disabilities

- A. Prepare an assessment of wheelchair accessibility and a plan to improve it in our communities and in Acadia National Park.
- B. *Make the Shore Path in Bar Harbor accessible.*
- C. *Improve sidewalks so that they are accessible.*
- D. *Improve community facilities so that they are accessible.*
- E. *Make sure that the BH Walking Tour route is accessible and the map highlights accessible features.*
- F. *Make the Causeway in Southwest Harbor accessible.*

5. Changes in municipal policy and procedures supportive of active community environments

- A. Change zoning to facilitate downtown development that allows people to walk/bicycle to work/encourage compact, pedestrian/bicycle friendly development.
- B. Pursue the idea of turning Bar Harbor into a downtown pedestrian mall.
- C. Create an incentive for people, especially in summer, to use their bicycles (which would help mitigate traffic impacts)
- D. Establish an MDI Planning and Design forum – a monthly public opportunity for towns, developers, engineers, and architects to bring proposed ordinances, properties, and buildings forward for free professional and citizen input into policy and design changes to enable active living.
- E. Create a model health impact assessment for town planning boards to use when considering development proposals.
- F. Add bicycle-parking capacity on MDI and encourage people to use it responsibly (i.e. not to take up the whole rack when locking to it).
- G. *Plow and maintain the sidewalks.*
- H. *Sweep the road shoulders in spring.*
- I. *Develop incentives for the creation of bike facilities (e.g. reduce parking requirements if businesses elect to put bicycle parking in and encourage employees to use it, etc.)*

J. Change zoning to facilitate development of a downtown pedestrian mall (i.e., encourage retail businesses along the pedestrian mall, but keep important city services like the banks and post offices in locations that folks can drive to).

6. Increased community collaboration in support of active community policies, practices and environments

- A. Revive the MDI Bicycle Association
- B. Link Healthy Schoodic walks with the Footloose Friends.
- C. Meet with MDOT, town leaders, residents, and interested folks regarding road projects proposed over the next biennium and within the MDOT six-year plan, and come to agreement on road widening and/or other project specifics.
- D. Work with MDOT, towns and others to BUILD bikeways.
- E. Work with the bike shop owners to run bike rentals through the hotels and cottages.
- F. Hire a part-time staff coordinator to work with this committee and raise funds.
- G. *Develop questions for the MDI Tomorrow survey that will provide answers about community preferences related to bicycling and pedestrians.*
- H. *Work with the scenic byways corridor management committee, the Schoodic ferry, accessibility groups, youth groups (scouts), community health organizations, COA, and others on bicycling and pedestrian issues.*
- I. *Work with inns on promoting bicycle tourism to the area.*

7. Heightened public awareness of the public health and transportation benefits of active living design

- A. Hold bike rodeos/work in the schools to encourage kids to bicycle (Saco and Biddeford have good programs).
- B. Build awareness with businesses to encourage their employees to walk/ride bicycles into town.
- C. Create a series of public service announcements
- D. *Partner with the community design and land use group to encourage in-fill development rather than sprawl.*

8. We want MDI to be safe for bicyclists, both recreational and commuting, and pedestrians.

- A. Produce a “Leash Your Dog” brochure for the carriage roads to limit problem interactions with off-leash dogs.
- B. More/better signage – “Share the Road”
- C. Build upon volunteer and ranger bicycle patrols on the carriage roads
- D. Emphasize the “rules of the road” on the carriage roads.
- E. Look into the “safe bike routes” brochure for Bar Harbor *and consider developing one for the entire island. The MDI Bicycle Association is presently looking at revising the bicycle map for MDI.*
- F. *Sign the sidewalks on which bicyclists are permitted to ride.*

9. Develop a connection to the East Coast Greenway/Sunrise Trail.

5. Next meeting date, location, and assignments

The next meeting will be Tuesday, June 3rd at 6:30 P.M. – 8:00 P.M. at the MDI High School Library. If you are unable to come to the meeting, but would like to provide input or stay informed, please contact Stephanie Clement at 288-3340 (stephanie@friendsofacadia.org) or Doug Michael at 288-5331 (doug@healthyacadia.org). At the next meeting, we will select criteria for prioritizing strategies, begin the prioritization process, and make assignments for action.

Respectfully submitted,

**Stephanie M. Clement
Friends of Acadia**