



TOWN OF BOLTON

Mobility Committee

Non-motorized Transportation Recommendations

Mary Ciummo (Chair), Gordon Taylor, Peter Ross, Winslow Green



1.0 released version, September 9 2014

Executive Summary.....	1
Introduction	2
Committee Members	3
Goals of the Plan.....	3
Process	3
Involvement of Bolton Planning Department	4
Survey	4
Public Forum.....	4
Meetings with Neighboring Towns	5
Involvement of “WalkBoston”	5
Current Pedestrian and Bicycling Facilities in Bolton	6
Prioritized Specific Initiatives Recommended by the Committee	7
Summary of Survey Findings	8
Summary of Public Forum	9
Walkway Policies of Neighboring Towns.....	11
Funding, Training and Administrative	13
Summary of Comments from the Survey	15
References and additional information.....	18

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to propose facilities to enable better non-motorized mobility throughout our town. We recommend a network of pedestrian walkways and improved bicycling facilities to allow easy and safe access to destinations within and beyond Bolton. We arrived at our recommendations by conducting a survey, holding a public forum, meeting with our town committees and department heads, and also meeting with planners from other towns.

Our recommendations reinforce and expand upon recommendations made in the Bolton Master Plan dated August 2006¹.

The Committee's recommendations are as follows:

Safety

- Install walkways on all major roads, with Main Street as the top priority.
- Install paved shoulders on all major roads, with Main Street as the top priority.
- Have walkways connect to conservation trails to create larger walking loops.
- Implement traffic calming measures such as lane narrowing and curb extensions, especially in the Town center.
- Install bicycle safety signage, such as "Share the Road Community" and "Right to Bike." Also paint shared lane markings (also known as sharrows²) on appropriate roads.
- Provide bicycle and pedestrian education and support programs in the schools.
- Install traffic lights with pedestrian control and crosswalks at appropriate places.

Administrative

- Make changes to the Subdivision Rules and Regulations to require sidewalks along the frontage of existing public streets.
- Require payment to the Town for construction of walkways in other areas in lieu of constructing walkways in new subdivisions if the latter is found to be unnecessary.
- Create a bylaw that requires mitigation by developers for pedestrian and traffic improvements if the Town deems that the development (commercial or residential) has an impact on adjacent road access.

¹ Available at Bolton Town Hall

² Described fully in "Shifting Gears" published by MassBike; see the "helpful Organizations" section of the "References and Additional Information" at the end of this document.

- Provide for maintenance and repair for existing walkways in the DPW's annual budget.
- Have the Town adopt the Massachusetts Complete Streets³ policy which states that all road projects must include accommodations for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- The Town should consider becoming a CPA community in order to qualify for grants.

Opportunity

- Enhance the use of the land around the Derby conservation area, Town fields, Bolton Country Manor, community garden, office park, and Emerson/Sawyer Schools (herein referred to as the town land around the elementary school buildings). This will create recreational walking/bicycling loops, using existing town sidewalks and paths. Include way finding signage. Make use of the Old Lancaster Railway bed as a point of interest where it lies on public land.
- Spearhead walkway construction on secondary and minor roads through neighborhood petitions.
- Ensure Bolton's "Walkability Index"⁴ is improved. This will increase Bolton's desirability as a town to live in and thus enhance property values.
- Make connections to bike trails in the areas surrounding Bolton.
- Make safe connections to regional transit systems (buses, trains, etc.).

Introduction

Bolton values its winding, stonewall and tree-lined country roads, many of which have been designated as scenic roads. Pedestrians, bicyclists, and horseback riders share our roads with increasing car and truck traffic. The shared use of our roads for all travelers is becoming more important in safety and quality of life aspects. There is a growing trend for more and improved pedestrian and bicycling facilities.

The Board of Selectmen of the Town of Bolton appointed a Mobility Committee on October 6, 2011 at the request of the Public Ways Safety Committee and the recommendation of the Town Planner. Its stated task was to produce a Mobility Plan that would define ways to provide safer non-motorized mobility options for pedestrians and bicyclists in the Town of Bolton. The

³Available from the Massachusetts Municipal Association. Also see <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets>

⁴see www.walkscore.com

Public Ways Safety Committee was created in 2003 as an advisory resource for the Town. Working in conjunction with the Department of Public Works, Police Department, Planning Board, Selectmen, and Town Administrator, the Committee identifies, investigates, and proposes solutions to roadway concerns throughout the Town.

Implementing the report's proposals would slow traffic, improve safety, raise property values, improve health by encouraging regular exercise, and enhance the quality of life in Bolton.

The Committee recommends that walkways be separated from the street at a greater distance than a sidewalk, where feasible. They should meander around trees, behind stone walls and other obstructions, blending in with natural land features and terrain.

Committee Members

The Committee is currently comprised of four members: Mary Ciummo, Winslow Green, Peter Ross, and Gordon Taylor.

Quorum has been set at attendance by four committee members. Minutes are available on the Bolton town web site and hard copies can be obtained from the Town Hall. Initial meetings were dedicated to discussions about the general approach to the work.

After collation of the survey results and collection of feedback obtained at the public forum, the data were analyzed at committee meetings to produce the content of this report.

Goals of the Plan

- Expand a system of walkways to connect to destinations.
- Improve facilities for safe bicycling in the Town of Bolton.
- Improve safety and quality of life.
- Encourage exercise to promote better health.
- Maintain the Town's rural character.
- Increase value to the Town.

Process

In order to develop recommendations for the Plan, the Committee:

- Worked with the Bolton Planning Department.
- Conducted a Mobility Survey in October 2012 for all Town residents in order to solicit their opinion on non-motorized mobility in Bolton.

- Held a public forum on November 27, 2012.
- Met with town planners from Sudbury, Stow and Lincoln.
- Received support from WalkBoston, a nonprofit membership organization dedicated to improving walking conditions in cities and towns across Massachusetts.

Involvement of Bolton Planning Department

The Town Planner, Jennifer Burney, was enthusiastic about improving non-motorized mobility and attended a Public Ways Safety Committee meeting in January 2012 to discuss the formation of the Mobility Subcommittee:

- Safety of pedestrians and cyclists on Bolton roads has always been a concern of the Public Ways Safety Committee which was instrumental in the construction of the sidewalk on Main Street between the Senior Housing and the Salt Box in 2007 as well as requesting the sidewalk along the frontage of the Pondsides development on Main Street.
- Initiatives of neighboring towns were discussed and investigated. The Town Planner described how help or funding might be available from the State.
- The proposal to form the Mobility Committee was approved by the Board of Selectmen.

Survey

A survey was developed over several committee meetings. All town residents were invited to participate:

- A series of questions were developed to be answered online through a service called "Survey Monkey."
- A paper version was also available for Bolton residents without internet access.
- A basic level of survey was available free of charge, but for a small fee, a more detailed analysis of results could be obtained. The Town Planner agreed to fund this extra analysis.
- The survey ran for three weeks starting in early September 2012 and a good response of 302 was received.

Public Forum

Shortly after the completion of the survey the forum was held on November 27, 2012 at the Library.

- Announcements were posted as is normal procedure for any public hearing. The forum was advertised on the Town web site and email distribution list.

- The forum had four main sections:
 - A presentation of the results of the survey. This was not only to display what was learned but to highlight issues for discussion at the forum.
 - A “mapping” session in which the attendees were split into 5 groups each with a large printed map of the Town. They used colored pens to mark their individual priorities for improvements for walking or bicycling. At the end, each group’s facilitator summarized the discussions.
 - A presentation from Tom Doolittle and Don Kindsvatter, also from Walk Boston, about the opportunities presented on town land around the elementary school buildings.
 - An open question and answer session.

Meetings with Neighboring Towns

The Committee examined neighboring towns’ walkway plans and, subdivision rules and regulations. This exercise helped to identify and prioritize opportunities, explore funding sources and legal issues.

Several members of the Committee met with town planners from:

- Stow
- Sudbury
- Lincoln

Involvement of “WalkBoston”

One source of help identified was “WalkBoston,” a State funded initiative to help plan walkability improvements:

- Bob Sloan from Walk Boston attended a Mobility Committee meeting and described how they could help create a survey to solicit citizen opinions and to follow up with a public forum.
- They had taken a ride around Bolton and saw the need for more walkways, but they were particularly interested in developing walking paths on the town land around the elementary school buildings. A series of circular routes of different lengths were envisaged.
- Most of their experience was with more urban environments but their suggestions and enthusiasm were very helpful.

Current Pedestrian and Bicycling Facilities in Bolton

Pedestrians

Pedestrian facilities in Bolton are limited to those described in the “Existing Sidewalks Report” from the Public Ways Safety Committee Chaired by Daniel Senie dated 8 August 2007, plus some additions associated with new developments such as recent subdivisions and on Route 117 near the Pondsides condominiums. Another assessment of sidewalks in Bolton is included in the Metropolitan Area Planning Council reports⁵.

Some additional pathways exist off the roadways such as

- Pathways in the town land around the elementary school buildings
- Paths on town-owned conservation land
- Paths on Conservation Trust land

There are four crosswalks in the town center; two on Route 117/Main Street, one on Wattaquodock Hill Road at the junction with Main Street and one at the end of Mechanic Street where it meets Main Street. There are no facilities for crossing Bolton's busiest roads apart from these.

Bicycles

Bicycle facilities in Bolton are limited to a paved shoulder on both sides of Route 117 east of Hudson Road.

The town is a destination for bicyclists because of its rural nature, challenging hills, good views, refreshment places (e. g. Bolton Orchards and Slater's) and back roads.

Bicyclists along with pedestrians have a problem crossing major roads.

Bicycles are vehicles under the law and as such are not always seen to require special facilities. In general bicycling is increasing for recreation and as a means of transport with bicycle commuting being encouraged for health and environmental reasons. Other towns are making special accommodations to ensure safe bicycling. Rail trails and greenways are much needed for recreation and commuting.

An 877 mile statewide network of recreational trails is planned and partly constructed. Local parts of this network include the planned Mass Central Rail Trail and the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail from Acton to Lowell which will be extended in 2014/2015. Also, there are plans in

⁵Metropolitan Area Planning Council reports can be found at <http://www.mapc.org>

progress to extend the Assabet River Rail Trail eastwards from Hudson. Bolton's desirability would be enhanced with connections to these routes.

Other

Horses can use some trails on conservation land and do use back roads.

Mountain biking, snowshoeing and cross country skiing are possible on conservation land.

Prioritized Specific Initiatives Recommended by the Committee

Priority	Road, Walkway and/or Bike lane alteration
1	Improve the Nashoba Regional High School area by reengineering the Forbush Mill Road/Green Road/117 intersection to resolve all safety issues especially for pedestrians and bicycles crossing Main Street. Create walkways to the school from surrounding neighborhoods.
2	Extend paved shoulders on Main Street from Hudson Road west to the Lancaster town line.
3	Add ⁶ a sidewalk on Wattaquadock Hill Road from Main Street to Memorial Field in order to complete walking loops on the town land around the elementary school buildings.
4	Extend sidewalk on the north side of Main Street from Harvard Road west to connect to the sidewalk at the Pondsides residential development.
5	Create short segments of walkways at danger spots. Example: At the sharp curve on Sugar Road by Firematic Supply Co. and at the tennis courts on Green Road.
6	Extend the sidewalk on Main Street from the Bolton Office Park/Country Manor Senior housing east to Hudson Road to connect to the shops at the Country Cupboard and the potential mixed use village overlay development.
7	Turning lanes and refuge islands will improve bicycle and pedestrian safety at some exposed intersections; for example Green Road/Forbush Mill Road with Route 117; turning left on to Wilder Road from Route 117; turning left on to East End Road from Route 117.
8	Current and future traffic lights should have associated crosswalks and pedestrian control.
9	Extend the sidewalk on the south side of Route 117 from the Library to the Catholic Church. ⁷

⁶ Main Street Safety Task Force Report; October 1 2002

⁷ Main Street Safety Task Force Report; October 1 2002

Summary of Survey Findings⁸

Nearly 90% of respondents favored more walkways in Bolton, especially on Route 117, to enable safe connections to destinations such as conservation land, the Post Office, library, and Bolton Orchards. While there was little (19%) support for walkways on lanes, there was greater support for walkways on minor roads (32%), side/secondary roads (78%), and major roads (87%). Respondents would use walkways for exercise (91%), access to destinations (75%), biking (62%), walking with children (55%), walking with pets (53%), and smaller numbers favoring XC skiing, snow shoeing, roller blading etc. In decreasing order of frequency requested walkways should connect to:

- Recreational areas (79.5%),
- Library (75.9%)
- Schools (72.7%)
- Conservation land/trails (68.7%)
- Commercial areas (58.3%)
- Town hall (54%)
- Residential areas (48.2%)
- Farms/farm stands (40.6%)
- Town beach (28.4%)
- Places of worship (22.3%)
- Golf courses (5%)
- A bike path along Hudson Rd, to connect with the Assabet River Rail Trail leading to commercial areas in Hudson and Marlboro was advocated.

Residents were concerned about walking/biking safety in Bolton. Heavy traffic and speed of cars and trucks, especially on Route 117, were the greatest concerns. Concern was expressed about the lack of walkways on major roads for connection to important destinations such as Bolton Orchards and the Post Office. Connection between the Florence Sawyer School and the Library, plus a route around Nashoba Regional High School and its athletic fields was also suggested.

Lack of lighting, poor road condition, poor visibility on winding roads such as Green Rd. and at intersections due to overgrown vegetation, poor condition of sidewalks, and lack of shoulders

⁸ The complete Survey Results are available at Bolton Town Hall

on many major roads, lack of pedestrian signals and crosswalks and badly located mailboxes were of concern.

83% of residents favored the addition of a paved shoulder along Route 117 west of Hudson Rd. where it does not currently exist. There was much concern about bicycle safety on Route 117, our busiest road. Opinions ranged from those who thought that cyclists should not use the road to those who saw a shoulder as a safety improvement for those cyclists who are obliged to use it or will use it anyway. One saw a shoulder as “a good alternative to doing nothing” and others wanted a walkway in addition to the shoulder. 82% favored adding a paved shoulder along major roads such as Hudson, Still River, and Wattaquaddock Hill Roads. Other roads mentioned were Green and Harvard Roads. 73% were in favor of improvements to paths between senior housing and the town land around the elementary school buildings.

There were varying degrees of support for granting easements for non-motorized mobility improvements. Excluding those who responded N/A in each instance, of the remainder, 78% would grant an easement for a meandering walkway while 22% would not, 84% would grant an easement for sidewalks along Route 117 while 16% would not, and 73% would grant an easement to gain access to conservation land while 27% would not.

Support for funding projects was 88% for developer contribution and 73 % for Annual Town Meeting appropriation. The final question (Section 19) gave residents the opportunity to make suggestions regarding non-motorized mobility in and around Bolton as well as to share any information that they would like with the Committee.

More detail can be found in the section entitled “Summary of comments from the survey” later in this document.

Summary of Public Forum⁹

The Forum was held at the library and had 35 participants including 2 selectmen. Its purpose was to present the findings of the Mobility Survey and to solicit input from town residents. Presentations were made by Town Planner Jennifer Burney and Committee Chairman Mary Ciummo. The results of the survey were presented and terms were defined. Then participants broke out into 5 groups each with a committee member as facilitator and an enlarged map of the town. They were instructed to indicate on the maps their preferences for locations of

⁹ The Complete results of the Forum can be found in the Mobility Minutes of Nov. 27 and Dec. 3, 2012 available at Town Hall

improvements to our transportation infrastructure, specifically, shared shoulders, walkways (sidewalks and meandering pathways) and trails. They were asked to ignore considerations of expense and implementation. The results of the five tables are summarized below:

Paved Shoulders: There was a universal request for paved shoulders on Route 117W at least as far as Bolton Orchards and preferably to the Lancaster line. Also on Route 85 for the 1.6 miles needed to connect with Hudson shoulders and allow connection to the Assabet River Rail Trail. Other locations requested were Route 110 (both sides) south of Route 117, Wattaquadock Hill Road most of the way to the Clinton line, Wilder Rd, and Harvard Rd.

Sidewalks: A universal request was for a sidewalk along Route 117 as far as Bolton Orchards. Questions were raised as to topographic issues, guard rails, and on which side to place the sidewalk. Another suggestion was a sidewalk along Wattaquadock Hill Road from Route 117 to Memorial Field to provide access pathways to Florence Sawyer School and continuation of this to the Winery and W. Berlin Rd. Sidewalks were also requested for:

- Route 117 from Harvard Rd as far as Sampson Rd.
- Still River Rd. north of Route 117
- South side of Route 117 from the library to Manor Rd.
- The entire length of Green Road
- Golden Run Road where needed for safety.
- Pathways: Requests were made for:
 - A pathway to connect the Paragon parking lot to the Delaney Land
 - Trails along the gas line right of way to access Nashoba Regional High School
 - A pathway to connect Fox Run Rd. to Nashoba Regional High School
 - Improved access to Still River Wildlife Refuge trails
 - Trail along Deer Path common land to Nashoba Regional High School
 - A winding trail through the lower winery land
 - Sidewalk from the Senior Center to connect to the office building at 563 Main Street.
 - Sidewalk along Route 117 from Bolton Woods Way to Slater's restaurant
 - Pathways to improve access to conservation areas and trails.

Other Issues: Cross walks were requested at Nashoba Regional High School, the Library and at the office building at 563 Main Street. Also a pedestrian operated stoplight to supplement the crosswalk at Wattaquadock Hill Road. Snow clearing was mentioned and most trails and walkways were considered to be three season. Speed of traffic on Route 117 was considered a major issue particularly at the dangerous intersection at the Nashoba Regional High School.

Needs of the elderly and handicapped should be considered. There should be consideration given to education of the public regarding sharing the roads by all users.

Walkway Policies of Neighboring Towns

The Committee met with the town planners from Lincoln, Sudbury and Stow to discuss their Subdivision Rules and Regulations and other issues that pertained to pedestrian and bicycling amenities and safety.

Bolton's Subdivision Rules and Regulations require sidewalks on major, secondary and minor roads. No sidewalks are required for lanes. In cul de sacs, where applicable, sidewalks may end at the beginning of the cul de sac but do not have to go all the way around. Handicap ramps and extension of sidewalks are to be provided at all street intersections.

Sudbury's Subdivision Rules and Regulations require walkways on all subdivision streets. The emphasis is to blend in with natural land features and terrain with the goal of maintaining a natural appearance. Walkways may be required along existing highways when adjacent land is subdivided. The Planning Board may require payment to the town for construction of walkways in other areas in lieu of construction in the subdivision.

Sudbury still needs walkways on approximately 10 miles of its major through streets. Each year, the town asks for, and receives, \$100,000 for new construction at town meeting. They have their own engineering department, but hire out for the construction phase. Their DPW's annual operating budget contains \$20,000 for walkway maintenance; and one segment of old walkway is usually replaced each year. Snow removal is also included in the DPW operating budget. The town is responsible for snow removal on all walkways as well as any liability.

Sudbury also has a Public Way Access Permit bylaw in their general bylaws that requires mitigation for pedestrian and traffic improvements if the development (commercial or residential) has an impact on adjacent road access.

The town is in the process of creating a bicycling and pedestrian committee to make the town more bicycle and walking friendly.

Stow's Subdivision Rules and Regulations require sidewalks on all subdivision streets. Sidewalks are also required along the portion of the existing public street that the subdivision has frontage. Sidewalks should be of a meandering design following existing terrain and land features. The Planning Board may require payment to the town for construction of walkways

in other areas in lieu of construction in the subdivision or require a sidewalk to be built in a surrounding area.

Stow raised \$230,000 in lieu of sidewalk construction costs (took about 15 years) and used it in their 2012 sidewalk extension on Route 117. The town might ask for a \$10,000 annual appropriation for new construction. Most of the “in lieu of” payments came from frontage that was too small.

In Stow’s experience most developers opt out of building sidewalks and instead make a payment in lieu of, or will put in a path to a trail system. They encountered no easement issues with the Route 117 project.

Phase 3 of Stow’s sidewalk plan will be based on density and safety at dangerous intersections. It will include neighborhood involvement.

At present there are no accommodations for cyclists; but improvements in the lower village area may include some.

Lincoln’s Subdivision Rules and Regulations require sidewalks and/or off-street paths on principal and secondary streets. They do not have an in lieu of clause. The town is committed to maintaining the historic, rural look of Lincoln. They use design guidelines and site plan reviews to design their pathways. It has taken 20 years to get 50% of the roads designed using the guidelines. The town center is almost 100% completed. Plowing is the town’s responsibility

At present, Lincoln is against widening roads to accommodate cyclists; they can use the pathways and trails throughout town.

Recommendations from the town planners of Sudbury, Stow and Lincoln to Bolton:

- Negotiate during the permitting process.
- Make changes to subdivision rules and regulations: include sidewalks on lanes and add an in lieu of clause.
- Create a public way access permit.
- Become a Community Preservation Act (CPA) community. Not only provides you with extra capital but also makes you eligible for other grants.
- For other means of financing look into USDA rural grant program for small towns and Chapter 90 grant money.
- Start a walkway initiative program and try to get 75% of the neighbors’ approval. Update them regularly with progress letters.

Funding, Training and Administrative

Implementation of improvements to the safety of non-motorized mobility is divided between improvements to current roads and those in or associated with new developments, residential, commercial or mixed use.

Existing Roads

- See the list of specific recommendations
- Improvements for cyclists are mostly required on the main roads, particularly Main Street.
- Improvements for pedestrians are needed on Main Street in several critical areas, on Wattaquodock Hill Road between Main Street and Memorial Field and on dangerous sections of several minor roads.
- An increased number of crosswalks may be needed on Main Street for example in the area of the High School and Post Office, near the Library and near any commercial or mixed use development on either side of I-495. New crosswalks may need to be designed to be ADA¹⁰ compliant.

Expand subdivision rules and regulations

Walking facilities related to new developments need to be more fully defined in the subdivision rules and regulations.

- Facilities within development.
 - Developers should be expected to fund walkways proportional to the total length of new roads.
 - However, walkways may not be beneficial or needed in some areas but the funding should be applied in lieu elsewhere in Town.
- Frontage sidewalks
 - Walkways should be built along the complete frontage of any new development as at Pondsides, but, while they may not go anywhere immediately, their provision gives the future opportunity to “connect the segments”. It is recognized that the Pondsides development is a pedestrian island until future walkways can be built to enable access to other destinations. The solution to this problem must be addressed in the planning stages of the subdivision.
 - If a subdivision has a very long frontage, like Century Mill/South Bolton Road/Spectacle Hill, the conditions on the adjacent roads may not demand a complete frontage walkway, but this situation should be considered at the planning stage. See the following paragraph.

¹⁰ Americans with Disabilities Act

- Developer contribution to town-wide non-motorized mobility funding.
 - When a new development is built, the increase in population and traffic creates additional load on Bolton's road infrastructure. A road that was safe for pedestrians or cyclists anywhere in Town may become unsafe due to the extra traffic created by the new development. A "cross border" example may be that South Bolton and Lively Roads may become more loaded due to the retail development at Highland Commons in Berlin.
 - The Town of Sudbury implements a "Public Way Access Permit" with a fee accrued for future infrastructure improvements. Bolton should investigate a similar mechanism.

Grants and State Funding

- Become a CPA community. Provides towns with funds to improve pedestrian facilities when land is converted for recreational use and provides eligibility for other grants.
- Chapter 90 funding provides for sidewalks and shoulders. Main Street west of Hudson Road will need improvements with funding mostly coming from the State. Improvements for pedestrians (sidewalks and walkways) and for cyclists (shared shoulders) are the highest priority recommendations in this report.
- Federal Transportation funding. TIP (Transportation Improvement Program) funding provides for pedestrian improvements.
- The possible state take-over of Route 117 would support implementation of MassDOT's GreenDOT policy, which would include Complete Streets design for all projects.
- Improvements around the I-495/117 intersection by the State should include safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Town Meeting Appropriation

- Walkways on some roads may have specific unsafe areas affecting local residents. It is recommended that local residents petition the Town for funds to make improvements in their area. An example may be areas of Green Road which may be unsafe for children walking home from school after hours or for the school track team training on local roads.
- 73% of the respondents in the survey supported funding of walkways through town meeting appropriation.

Easements

- Easements across private frontage property may be needed to complete a walkway, for example Pondside to Nourse Road.
- The Town should make sure that its Rights of Way are fully documented.
- The Survey and Public Forum indicated that there was a willingness to grant easements for such purposes.

Education

Encourage the School Committee to work with WalkBoston and Mass Bike to find ways to introduce bicycle and pedestrian safety into the schools and to encourage children to walk or bike to school.

Maintenance

Maintenance and repair for existing walkways should be allocated annually in the DPW's operating budget.

Summary of Comments from the Survey

All sections included a number of comments that questioned the need for walkways in Bolton and concern about cost especially given Bolton's tax level was mentioned frequently.

Section 8: What would you use walkways for?

Neighbors: 2

Safe travel for kids 4

Walking to town destinations instead of driving 6

No need 3

Other notes: Get bicyclists and drivers to coexist effectively, ADA¹¹ compliance, snowshoeing should be on woodland paths not on sidewalks.

20 submissions had comments on this question. The overwhelming reason cited for the need for walkways was exercise (91.4% of all respondents). But comments were mostly concerned about use of walkways for access to destinations – for visiting neighbors, schools, local amenities and businesses such as the library, town hall and shops (Bolton Orchards was mentioned specifically in one case). Significant concern was shown for the safety of children. Other comments were rather broader such as Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, improving the habits of road users and specific activities on trails such as horseback riding and snowshoeing.

Section 9: What destinations in Bolton would you like walkways to connect to?

Senior destinations 3

Post Office 2

Schools and library 3

¹¹ Americans with Disabilities Act

Assorted things on main roads 6

Recreation areas and stores 4

All points in town 4

Visiting acquaintances, childrens' friends, etc. 2

Not needed 3

26 respondents suggested destinations in the “other” category. Many of these were repetitions of places mentioned in the checkbox list and many were general comments rather than suggestions for destinations. A common theme was access to amenities that are on the main roads with destinations on or near Route 117 occurring often. Town buildings, stores, Post Office, schools, etc. are mentioned several times. Also mentioned was filling in the gaps in the current sidewalk along Route 117; Nourse Road was mentioned as end point specifically by one person another suggested from the Salt Box to Green Road.

Section 19: Do you have any suggestions or concerns regarding non-motorized mobility in and around Bolton? Or do you have any additional information that you would like the Mobility Committee to know?

About 120 respondents added extra suggestions and concerns. These covered many topics from priorities to specific suggestions to comments about the road users of all types. There no recurring theme and there are some very significant differences of opinion among town residents on this subject.

A number of respondents simply thanked the town and the committee for taking up this issue which is obviously a big concern for many people.

One family noted that the lack of facilities for non-motorized transport was a reason that they were planning to leave the town. Another compared Bolton's lack of walking and biking facilities unfavorably with those in the area in which he or she grew up in California. A third grew up in Maryland where apparently sidewalks are mandatory and this person could not understand how any community could not have them.

At least one person thought that Bolton would become more cohesive as a community if more people walked and biked rather than used cars. One assumes that implied by this remark is a feeling that town residents would interact more when walking to destinations.

Safety on specific roads came up a lot with Route 117 and destinations nearby appearing many times, but a number of people noted the prioritization just by road classification would not necessarily give the best results. State and county roads like Route 85 and Wattaquodock Hill Road are obvious choices, but there are town-maintained roads that have become very busy

because they are used as shortcuts or routes to avoid congestion by out of town commuters (Golden Run, Wilder Road and Berlin Road being examples).

Some people expressed concern that road conventions and rules were not always followed by walkers (staying on the left) and bicycles (riding >1 abreast and in large groups).

Another factor for prioritization was selection according to user type with walking and bicycling taking priority. Presumably these respondents would have lower priorities for cross country skiers, snowshoers, horseback riders, etc.

Cost was a reoccurring issue, but it was not the most significant theme. Some of those concerned about cost did not consider facilities for non-motorized traffic important, citing the tough economic times and the very high taxes that we have to pay. Commitment to cost of upkeep came up a number of times. Some respondents made suggestions for ways to raise money with developer funding being mentioned.

A number of people feel that Bolton is a rural town and that provision of walkways is not necessary in a community like this, but others have positive feelings about Bolton becoming a destination for out of town people with visitors to the Winery, and Pick Your Own farms being obvious examples; provision of suitable facilities for walkers, etc. would help in reaching the objective.

Some examples of thoughts gleaned from the suggestions and comments:

- Coordinate with bike trails in adjacent towns; Stow, Berlin and Sudbury being mentioned.
- Use Sudbury as an example to follow, not Hudson. Another person said look to Stow as an example because they are doing a great job on Route 117.
- This would be more of a requirement if more small businesses can be attracted to Bolton (overlay district?)
- There are paths to open spaces that are overgrown with an example of Fox Run being cited.
- Provide the Planning Department with clear maps of “thickly settled” and business areas using the Massachusetts definitions.
- Implement and enforce stringent rules about horse and dog owners cleaning up their pets' droppings.
- Use historical rail beds.
- Crossing Main Street is a problem. Traffic lights at the junction of Manor Road and 117. Safer junction at Mechanic Street and Route 117. Warnings about the state of the Route 110/Route 117 light to indicate green or red in advance of the junction.
- Repair existing sidewalks; accidents have happened where individuals have tripped on the unmaintained surface.

- Strict enforcement of traffic laws is needed.
- A concern that wider roads are needed in order to implement walkways and bike routes. One person did note that in many cases the easement for a particular road is not fully used (Route 110 was mentioned in this case).
- Wheelchair accessibility and safe walkability for seniors including the senior housing to town was mentioned. Also mentioned was safe access to Memorial Field with appropriate new walkways the walkway would be along Wattaquadock Hill Road.

References and additional information

Bolton Reports and Documents

Bolton Mobility Committee meeting minutes; available at Bolton Town Hall
Bolton Master Plan; August 31, 2006
Main Street Safety Task Force Report, Bolton Mass; October 1 2002
Public Ways Safety Committee, Bolton Mass; Existing Sidewalks Report ;8 August 2007
Mobility Committee Survey Results, Bolton Mass; available from the Town Hall
Mobility Committee Public Forum Results, Bolton Mass; can be found in the Mobility Minutes of Nov. 27 and Dec. 3, 2012 available at Bolton Town Hall.

Reference Documents

Shifting Gears; An introduction to Better Bicycling for your community, Massachusetts Bicycling Coalition, June 2012
Complete Streets Policies: Smart Growth America; www.smartgrowthamerica.org/complete-streets The City of Boston's policy; www.cityofboston.gov/transportation/completestreets/
Walkability Index; Measures how comfortable it is to walk in your area. www.walkscore.com
Walk Boston Promotes walking for transportation and recreation. www.walkboston.org

Rail Trails and Greenways

Bruce Freeman Rail Trail; Connecting Lowell, Chelmsford, Westford, Carlisle, Acton, Concord, Sudbury, and Framingham in Massachusetts. http://brucefreemanrailtrail.org/
Assabet River Rail Trail; promotes creation of a multi-use recreational trail through Marlboro, Hudson, Stow, Maynard and Acton on the old Marlborough Branch RR bed. http://www.arrrtinc.org
Mass Central rail Trail; 104 miles connecting 24 communities; Boston to Northampton; http://www.masscentralrailtrail.org/ http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/dcr/projects/mcrt/mepa-slides-2013-december.pdf
Minuteman Greenway: Bedford to Cambridge; www.minutemanbikeway.org

Helpful Organizations

MassBike; promotes a bicycle-friendly environment and encourages bicycling for fun, fitness and transportation. www.massbike.org
Metropolitan Area Planning Council; Promotes Smart Growth and Regional Collaboration. www.mapc.org
Rails to trails Conservancy; Creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people. www.railstotrails.org
Massachusetts Municipal Association; www.mma.org .