

# Mass in Motion: Stories from the Field

## Fall River and New Bedford Combine Efforts for Safe Regional Bikeway

**B**ack in 2010, Mass in Motion coordinators Julianne Kelly and Pauline Hamel of Fall River and New Bedford had an idea to plan an historic and scenic bicycle ride to raise awareness of the need for safe, alternative transportation and recreation routes between the two communities. would be? Additionally, not many could have guessed this idea would lead to the beginning of collective action toward realizing the dream of thousands of bicyclists: a pathway from “Providence to Provincetown.”

The Old Bedford-Old Fall River Bicycle Ride involved one group of bikers leaving from Fall River and another leaving from New Bedford and meeting at the halfway point in Dartmouth. The event realized great success due to the pledge of support by the leadership and police departments in the four communities that formed the route.

At a press conference at Cornell Pond, the scenic meeting place, the need for a regional bicycle summit was voiced by several town and city representatives, organizations and the general public. Mass in

Motion Fall River and New Bedford partnered with the University of MASS-Dartmouth and the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District. (SRPEDD) to plan the event around the theme of a regional pathway along the rail corridor.

The South Coast Bicycle Summit, held on February 15, 2011, drew an astounding 100 people who were greeted by Mayor Will Flanagan of Fall River and Renee Dufour representing Mayor Scott Lang of New Bedford. Dynamic and inspiring presentations were given by:

- » Massachusetts Commissioner of Conservation and Recreation
- » Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD)
- » Offices of Economic Development and Planning of Fall River, New Bedford and Westport
- » Dartmouth Planning Board
- » Friends of the Mattapoissett Bicycle and Recreational Path
- » Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc
- » Cape Cod Commission
- » East Coast Greenway

Since the February Summit, the South Coast Pathway Committee



*Bikers participate in the Old Bedford-Old Fall River Bicycle ride in 2010.*

includes the original communities and partners as well as bicycle groups spanning the entire South Coast, - from Fall River to Wareham. “Strength in numbers,” is the underlying theme that fuels this ambitious goal of realizing a connected pathway along the South Coast. Active bicycle committees have been established, or are currently in the works in Fall River, Dartmouth, New Bedford and Westport. At regional meetings these committees are joined by additional supporters from Wareham, Mattapoissett, Fairhaven and Tiverton, RI.

The formation of these collaborations is a great start to a regional commuter bikeway that will bring health, economic growth, environmental development and improvements to the quality of life of this region.

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