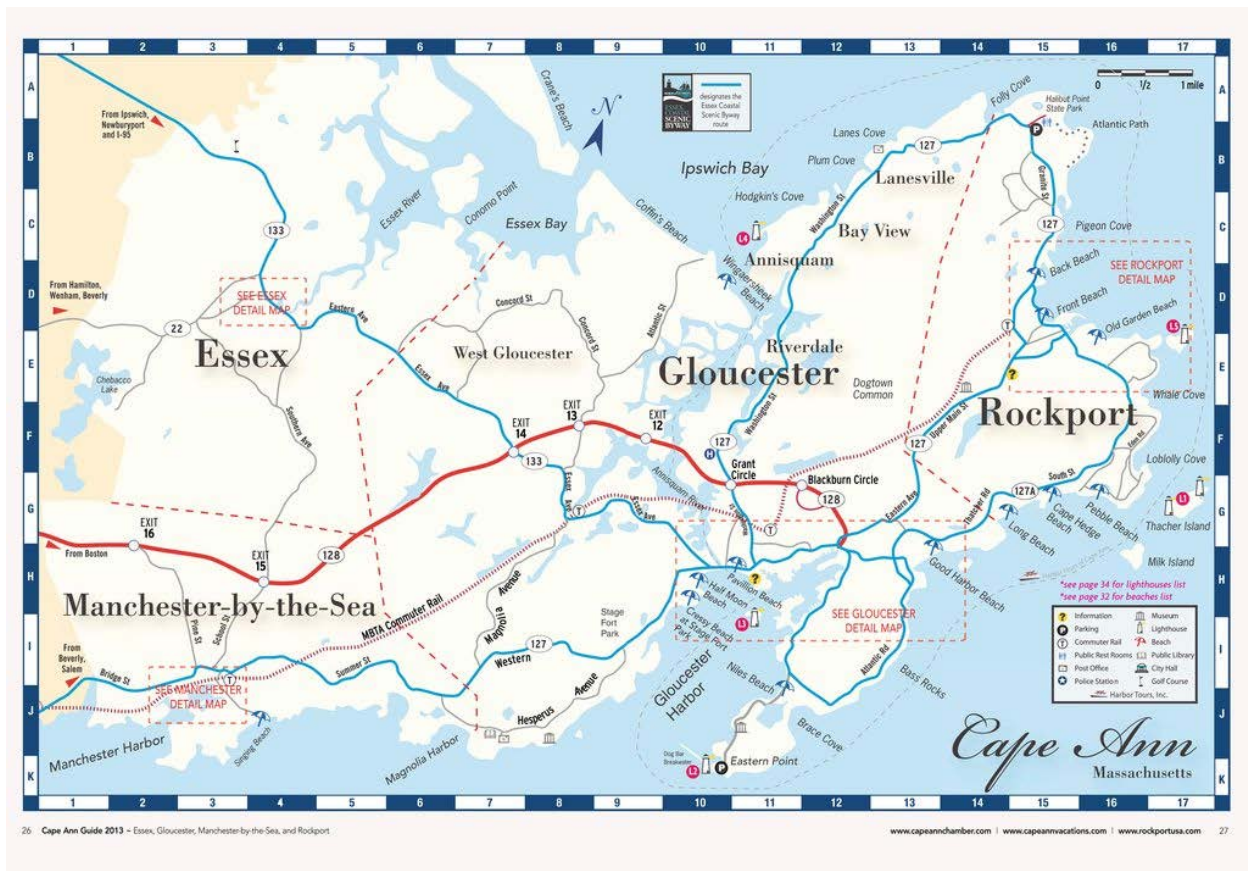


CAPE ANN BIKE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES REPORT



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What is Mass in Motion?

Mass in Motion is a statewide movement that promotes opportunities for healthy eating and active living in the places people live, work, learn and play. Mass in Motion works to ensure Massachusetts residents have access to healthy, affordable foods and opportunities for safe physical activity.

Working with a diverse network of partners, Mass in Motion communities work to implement proven policies and practices that create environments that support healthy living. The Mass in Motion Municipal Wellness and Leadership Initiative aims to lower the rates of obesity and chronic disease by supporting such equitable food access and active living opportunities.



Who is Cape Ann Mass in Motion?

The City of Gloucester Health Department serves as the host agency for Cape Ann Mass in Motion which is led by a part time Grant Coordinator. The coordinator oversees the Cape Ann Mass in Motion coalition which is composed of residents, municipal leaders and staff and community organizations within the communities of Gloucester, Rockport, Essex and Manchester-by-the-sea. Those involved in the coalition work with the grant coordinator to advance policy, systems, and environmental change as it relates to healthy food access and active living for all members of the Cape Ann region.

Cape Ann Mass in Motion's "Bike Friendly Communities Report"



In the fall/winter of 2020-2021 Cape Ann Mass in Motion embarked on a community engagement project centered on bike friendly communities to learn more from residents of Rockport, Gloucester, Essex and Manchester by-the-Sea on their impression of biking their community. This project was supported through a mini-grant award and technical assistance from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Mass in Motion Program and MassBike.

The Cape Ann Mass in Motion coalition has spent time working on initiatives around the strategy of active transportation. Active transportation planning helps municipalities establish processes that support walking, biking and use of public transportation. It also helps to identify where related infrastructure should be built. Higher rates of physical activity related to active transportation options can reduce rates of chronic disease and create safer communities per the Center for Disease Control's 2017 "Transportation Recommendations".

METHODOLOGY

First to build capacity Cape Ann Mass in Motion coalition members broke off into a sub work group focused on Active Transportation. This work group helped to provide additional feedback on the process. In addition technical support and guidance was provided by MassBike and Watson Active.

A google form survey asking a variety of questions relating to biking habits, impressions of biking in their community and demographics was created for ease of use and translation ability which 219 residents participated in. In addition a WikiMapping component was created and linked with the survey which was completed by 83 residents. The WikiMap component allowed respondents to identify and map out responses to prompted questions on an interactive map. Residents were asked to identify routes they currently ride, where they want/need to ride to, identify destinations, mark areas they feel may serve as suitable locations for a bike share and any areas where they find barriers to biking.

Four virtual community forums were held, one for each community which were open to all residents and municipal staff to participate in. Those who attended the virtual forums learned more about the work of Cape Ann Mass in Motion and the connection a bike friendly communities initiative has to public health. The forum provided the opportunity for participant feedback from those who bike and those who do not on improvements they would like to see as it relates to making their community more bike friendly. Comments from the community forums are included later in this report. As a variety of bike centric articles were in the local media over the summer and fall of 2020 the Cape Ann Mass in Motion Grant Coordinator received a number of emails and phone calls from residents on the topic of biking. Those additional comments are also included in this report.

The Bike Friendly Communities Survey & Wikimap and the community forums were publicized to Cape Ann residents through flyers made available in English, Spanish, Portuguese and Italian. This information was distributed through Cape Ann MiM coalition members to share with their audience. Individual communities also helped to publicize on city/town websites and social media pages. Small business cards with a QR code to scan to take the survey were made available for distribution. Facebook ads were also used to promote both the survey component and the individual community forums. The community forum ads on Facebook reached 988 people and garnered 12 responses. The survey ads on Facebook reached 4,701 people and engaged 428 people.

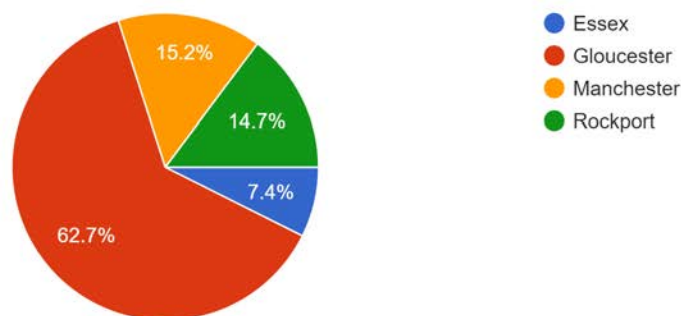
SURVEY DATA

About survey respondents

Residents of the communities of Rockport, Gloucester, Essex and Manchester-by-the-Sea all of which comprise the Cape Ann region were invited to participate in a “Bike Friendly Communities Survey”. The majority of respondents resided in Gloucester followed by Manchester, then Rockport and Essex.

What community do you live in?

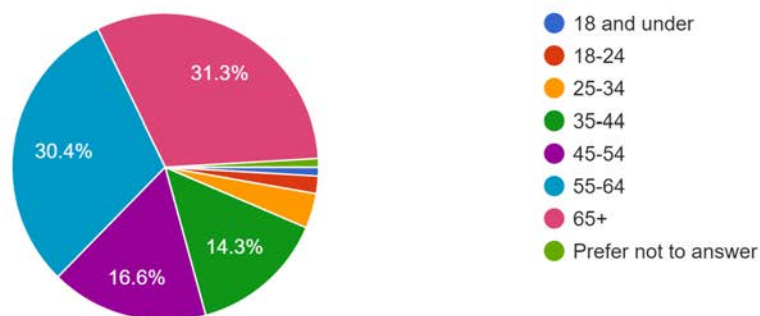
217 responses



The majority of respondents, 61.7% were age 55 and up with just slightly more in the 65 and older category. The high rate of participation from older adults matches the high population rate of this group in the Cape Ann region. Our communities have nearly the highest percentages of older adults in the state. Older adults nationally make up the fastest growing population of bicyclists.

Your age range

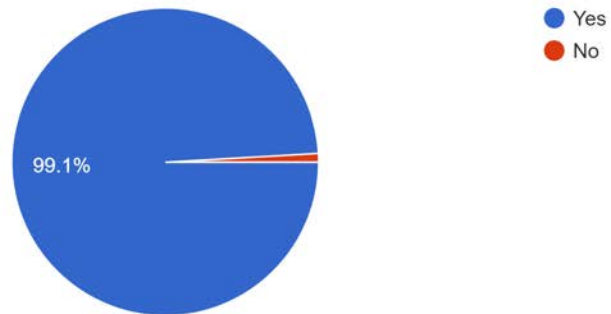
217 responses



The majority of our bike respondents, 99.1% own their own vehicle. A slightly smaller percentage, 91.7% stated they owned their own bicycle.

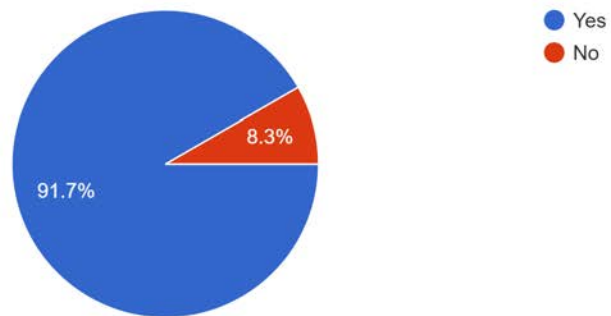
Do you own a car? 🚗

217 responses



Do you own a bike? 🚲

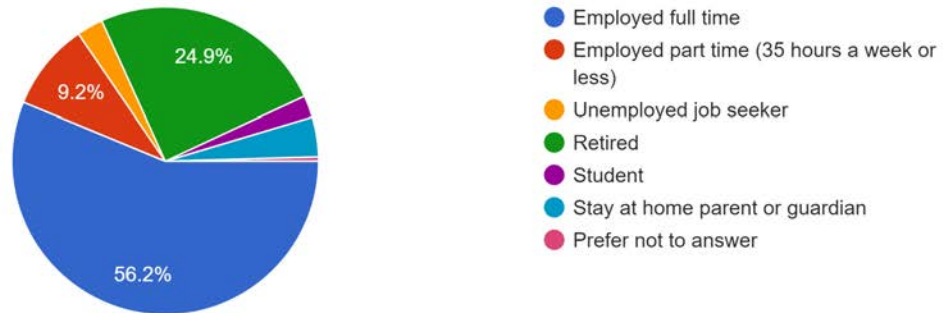
217 responses



Over half of respondents are currently employed in full time work. Nearly a quarter stated they are retired. The final 18.4% comprises part time workers, students, stay at home parents and unemployed job seekers. The majority of respondents were college educated individuals.

You are currently

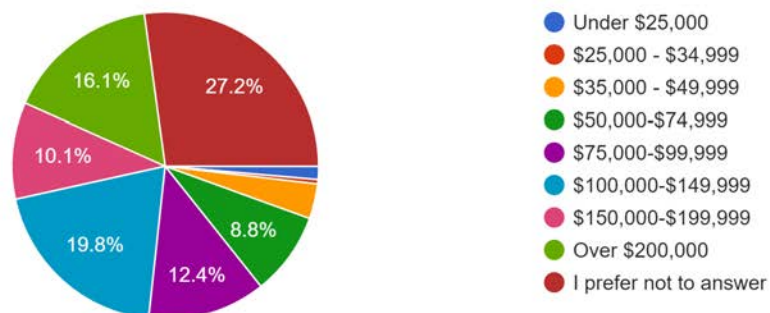
217 responses



The total 2019 household income before taxes garnered the majority of respondents preferring to not answer. When looking at the different income brackets survey respondents that provided information to this question mostly fell between \$75,000 - \$200,000. Only 4.2% reported total household income being under \$49,999. 77.9% of respondents own their own home and 14.7% rent.

In 2019 what was your total household income before taxes?

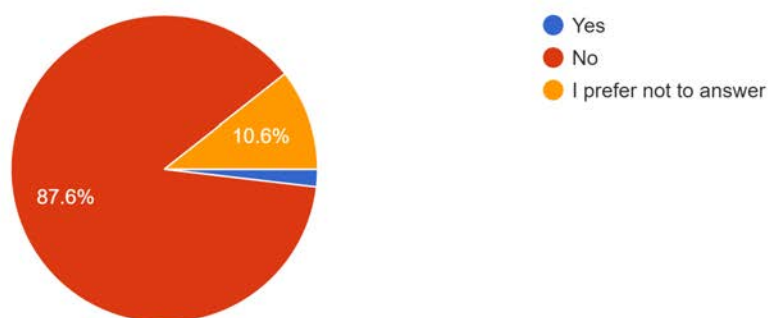
217 responses



Demographic questions around race and ethnicity also drew a substantial amount of those who preferred not answer. Only 1.8% responded to identifying as Hispanic. Individuals who identify as White made up 83.9% of our survey respondents, Asian 1.4%, Black 0.5% and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander 0.5% while 1.4% stated they identify as other.

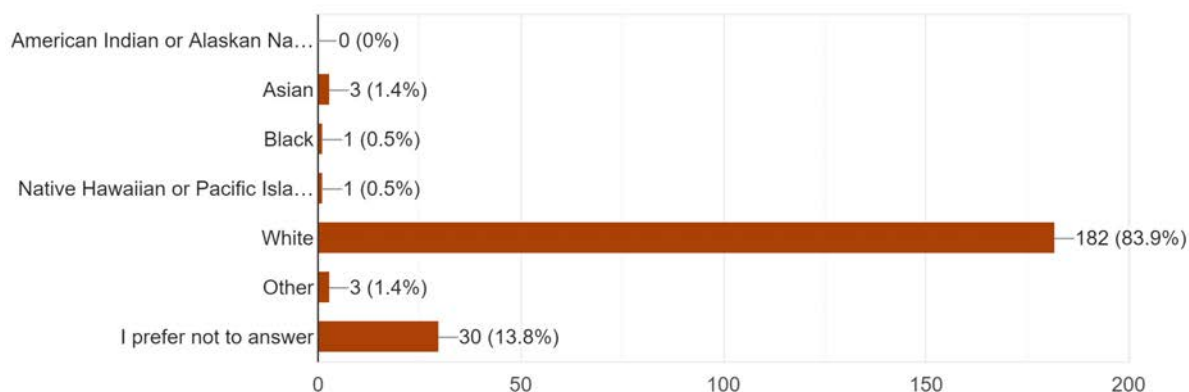
Are you Hispanic or Latino?

217 responses



What is your race? Select all that apply.

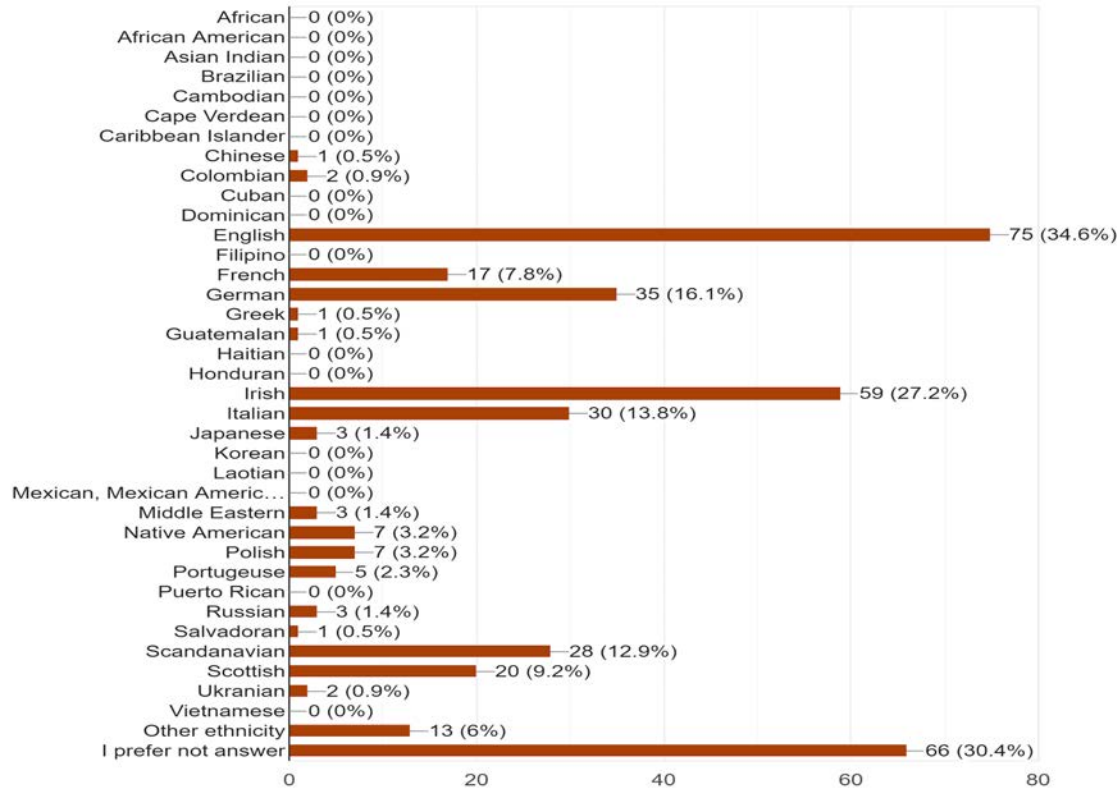
217 responses



Ethnicities identified by respondents living in the Cape Ann region found that Irish, German, Italian, Scandinavian, Scottish and French were the most common. Smaller percentages were noted for Native American, Polish, Portugeuse, Japanese, Russian and Middle Eastern. Ethnic groups with the lowest percentage of participation were from those of Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Greek and Chinese descent.

What is your ethnicity? Select all that apply

217 responses



Several languages in addition to English were identified as being spoken in the home of our survey respondents. Although response numbers were low to this question it is worth noting Spanish followed by German and French were reported having the highest votes. Other languages reported in smaller numbers were Italian/Sicilian, Arabic, Dutch, Portuguese, and Tetum. The Tetum language is native to the island of East Timor, part of Indonesia.

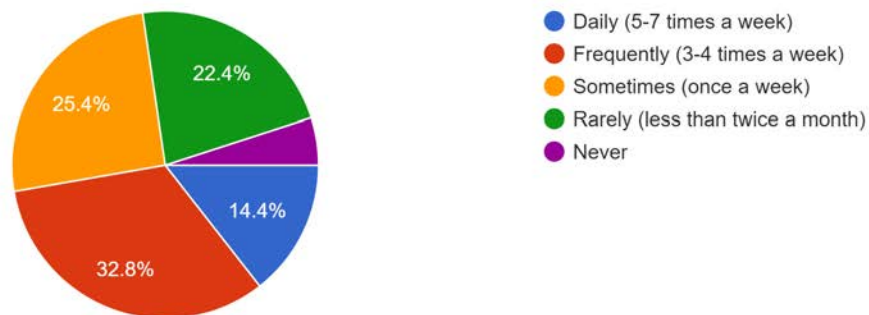
About Cape Ann Bicyclists

A series of questions were posed for those who do ride a bike so we could learn more about their bike riding habits. Questions were asked on how often individuals ride including the days, times of day and times of the year in which they participate in this activity. We wanted to know what were the reasons people were choosing to ride a bike. We asked if survey respondents would like to ride a bike more often than they currently do. And we inquired about helmet usage when riding a bike.

Nearly a third of respondents said they ride a bike frequently, three to four times a week while a quarter of respondents reported sometimes once a week. Summer followed by spring and then fall the most popular seasons in which over 90% of respondents ride a bike. A quarter of respondents stated they ride in the winter. 93% of respondents always wear a helmet when riding.

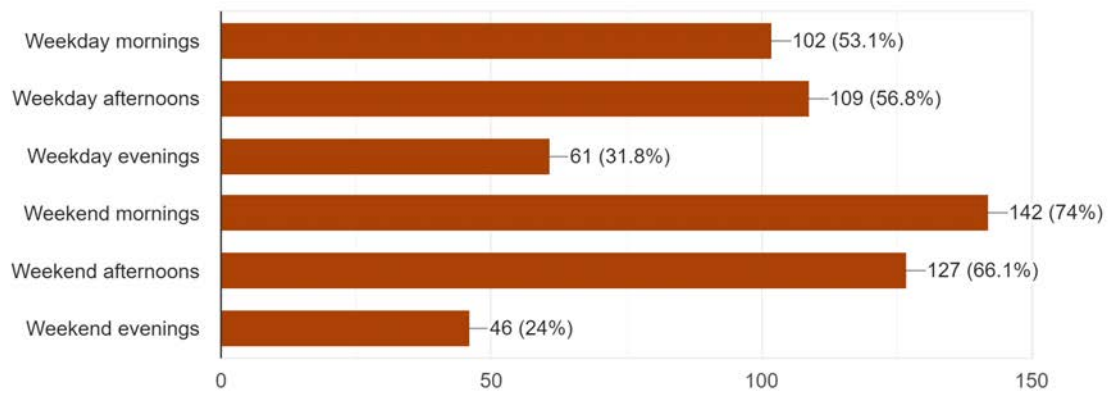
If you own a bike how often do you ride?

201 responses



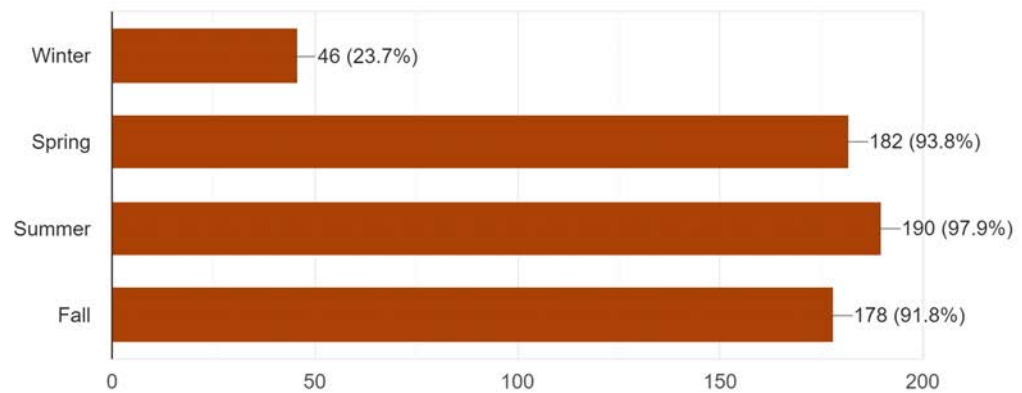
If you ride a bike what days and times of day do you ride? Select all that apply.

192 responses



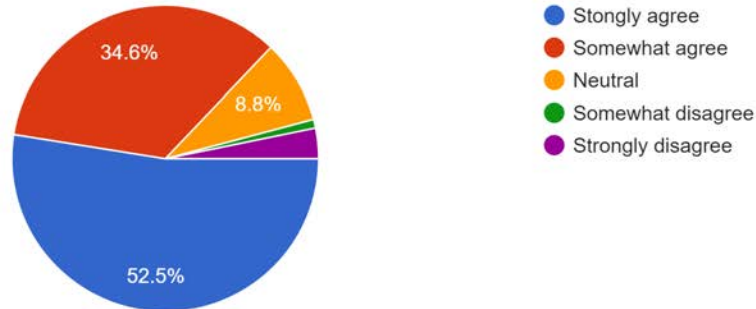
If you ride a bike what times of year do you ride? Select all that apply.

194 responses



How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I would like to travel by bike more often than I do now."

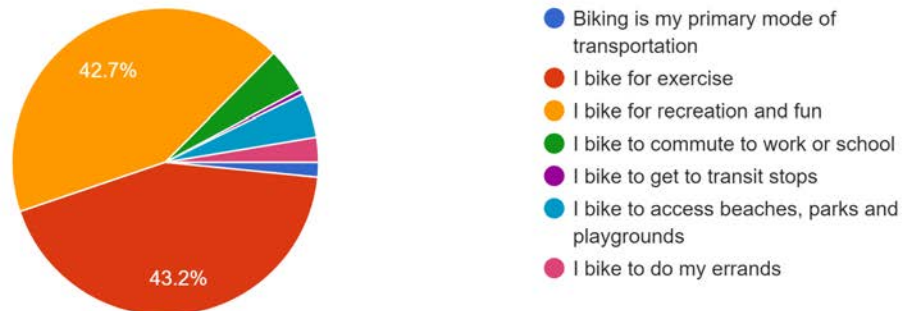
217 responses



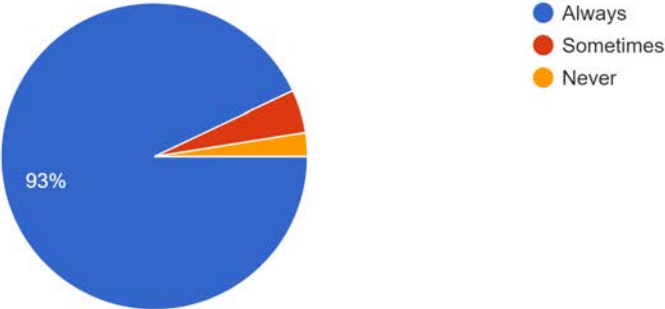
There are many reasons why people ride a bike. When asked to classify the majority of bike trips respondents were pretty evenly split on biking for exercise and biking for fun and recreation. Smaller percentages of people bike to commute to work or school, access beaches, parks and playgrounds, run errands, or as their primary mode of transport. More than half of survey respondents strongly agree they would like to travel by bike more often than they currently do.

If you ride a bike how would you classify the majority of your bike trips?

192 responses



If you ride a bike how often do you wear a bike helmet?
199 responses



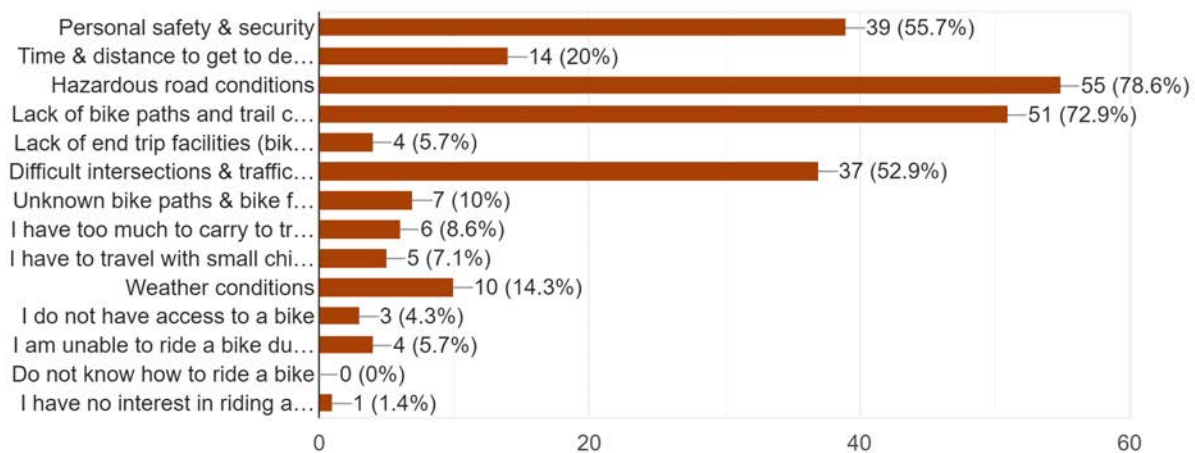
About Those Who Do Not Bike on Cape Ann

We encouraged those who do not ride a bike to also participate in our survey and forums. As we all share the roads it is important for us to learn more about why some users do not bike and hear their perspective.

Those that reported not biking were asked to select up to four reasons they do not bike. Hazardous road conditions, lack of bike paths and trail connections, difficult intersections & traffic and personal safety & security were the main reasons some do not bike on Cape Ann.

If you do not ride a bike please select up to 4 reasons why you do not bike.

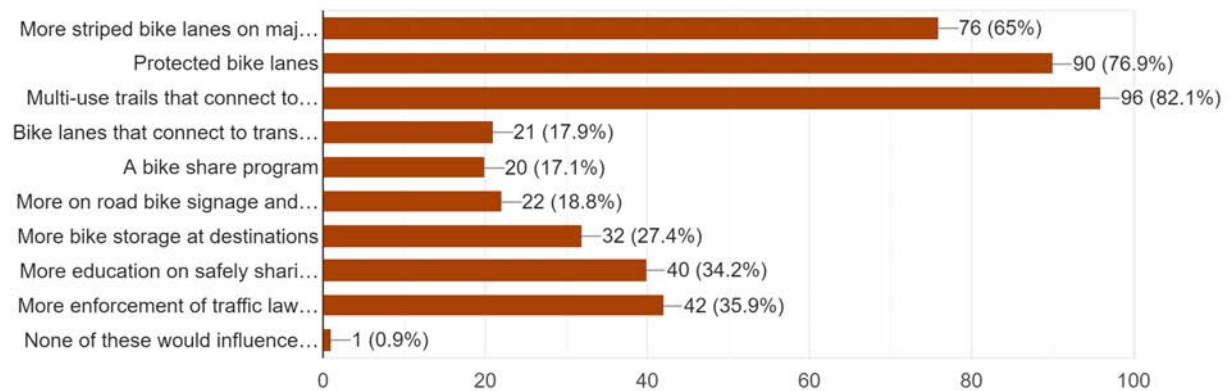
70 responses



Examples of hazardous road conditions found in the region.

Respondents who do not ride a bike were asked to select up to four bike friendly community improvements their community could make that may influence them to ride a bike. Multi-use trails connecting to other communities and destinations, protected bike lanes, more striped bike lanes on major roadways and more enforcement of traffic laws are what would influence more biking by residents.

If you do not ride a bike select up to 4 community improvements that may influence you to ride.
117 responses



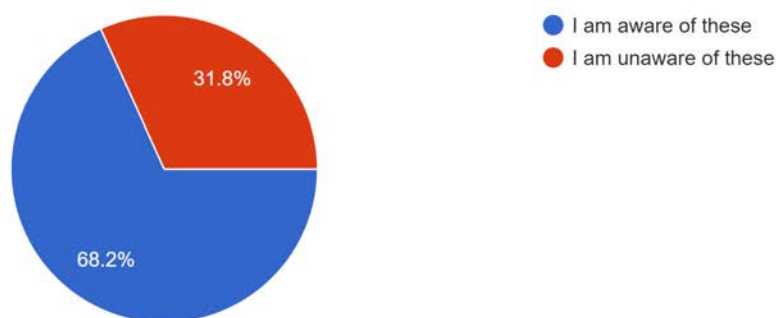
Examples of multi-use paths and protected bike lanes which are not found in our communities.

Transportation & Laws

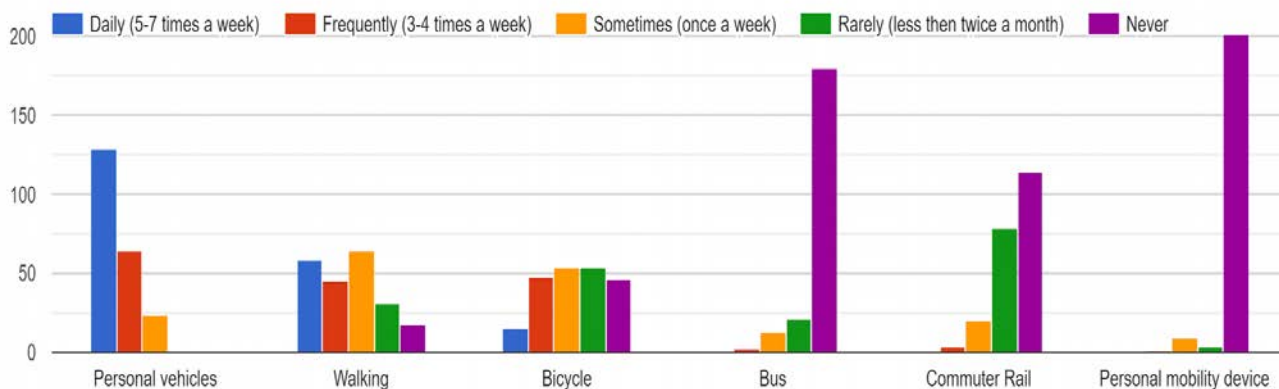
We surveyed respondents on how often they use a variety of transportation modes and their awareness of laws around biking. Nearly a third of people stated they were unaware of laws and regulations related to biking. A majority stated they use a personal vehicle daily which was not surprising. Almost 30% report walking once per week while a quarter said they bike at least once a week. 82% of respondents said they never use a bus and over half never use the MBTA commuter rail. 92% of respondents said they never use a personal mobility device as a mode of transportation while 4.5% use one daily.

How aware are you of laws and regulations related to biking in your community?

217 responses

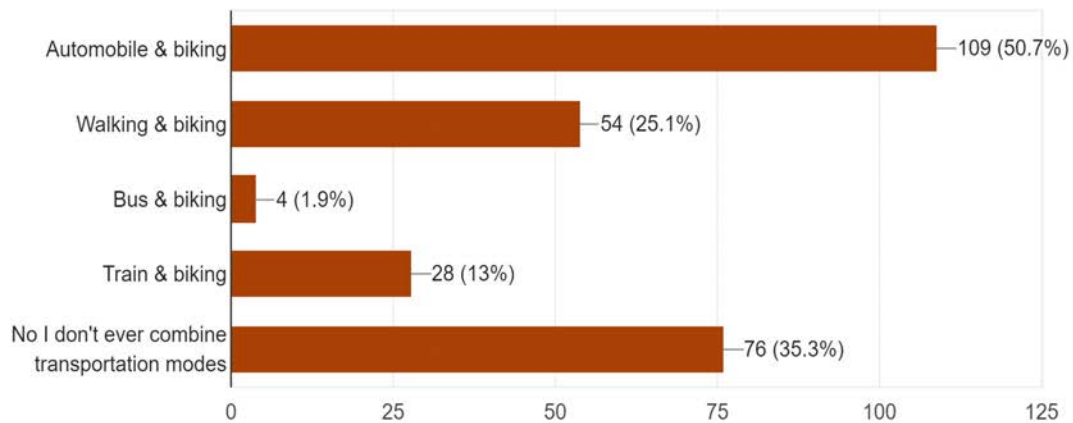


How often do you use the following as your primary mode of transportation?

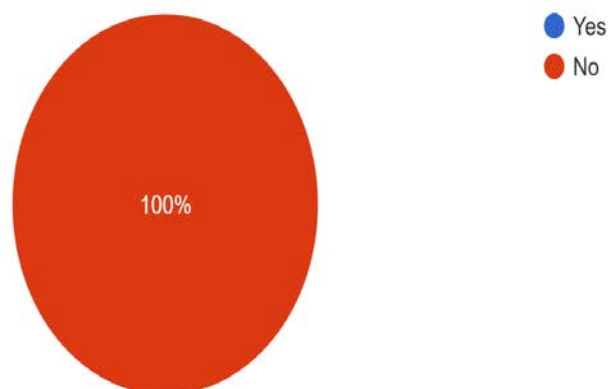


We also asked if people combined biking with other modes of transportation in a single trip. Some examples of why one might combine modes of transportation could be to access certain parts of the communities, getting to trails or recreational sites or for commuting purposes such as getting to transit stops. Half of respondents reported combining automobile and biking in a single trip. None of the respondents reported using bike racks on the buses of Cape Ann Transit Authority.

Do you ever combine any of the following modes of transportation in one trip? Select all that apply.
215 responses



If you use the Cape Ann Transit Authority(ATA) buses do you ever use bike racks on the bus?
100 responses



Biking & School

Those who were under age 18 who own a bike were asked about school transportation and why they do not bike to school. Only a quarter of respondents stated riding a bike to school when in session. The top reason reported why they do not bike to school are that there are no safe bike lanes or paths to get to school. The other main reason reported was that youth have too many belongings in which to bring to school such as instruments, sports equipment and multiple bags.

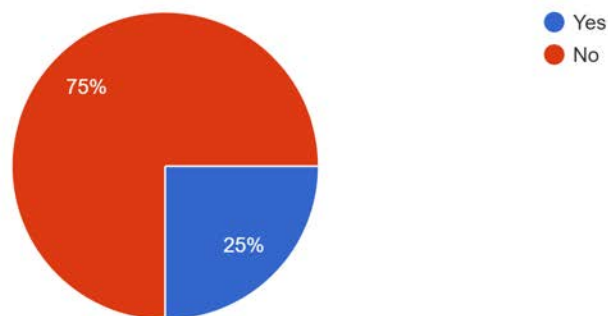
While questions of biking and school drew our smallest amount of respondents this information is still vital to our bike friendly communities work. During the course of the pandemic schools in the region have grappled with attendance issues during hybrid in-person learning days.

The City of Gloucester Health Department Prevention staff along with their coalition formed a sub-committee which looked at reasons for the lack of school attendance and found transportation to be a contributing factor. Many families could not afford bus fees and without safe walking and biking infrastructure to get to school transportation for low income families especially has become a major hardship. Driving in personal vehicles is not an option for all due to work schedules or for those families who do not own a vehicle.

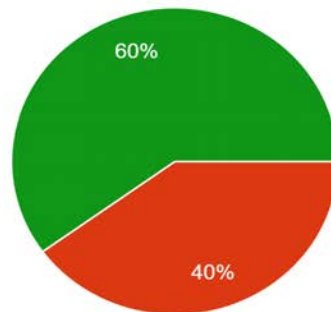
Cape Ann Mass in Motion connected staff to the Mass Department of Transportation Safe Routes to School Outreach Coordinator. The attendance sub-committee overseen by the health department is now exploring school transportation issues. The Safe Routes to School Coordinator continues work with the Manchester-Essex Regional School District rolling out resources there. Work is now underway to integrate this program in all of the Gloucester Public Schools as well. The Safe Routes to School Outreach Coordinator has been able to connect with administrators and school committee members and has provided needed resources and helpful feedback.

If you are under 18 and own a bike when school is in session do you ride to school?

8 responses



If you are under 18, own a bike and do not ride a bike to school why not? Select all that apply.
5 responses

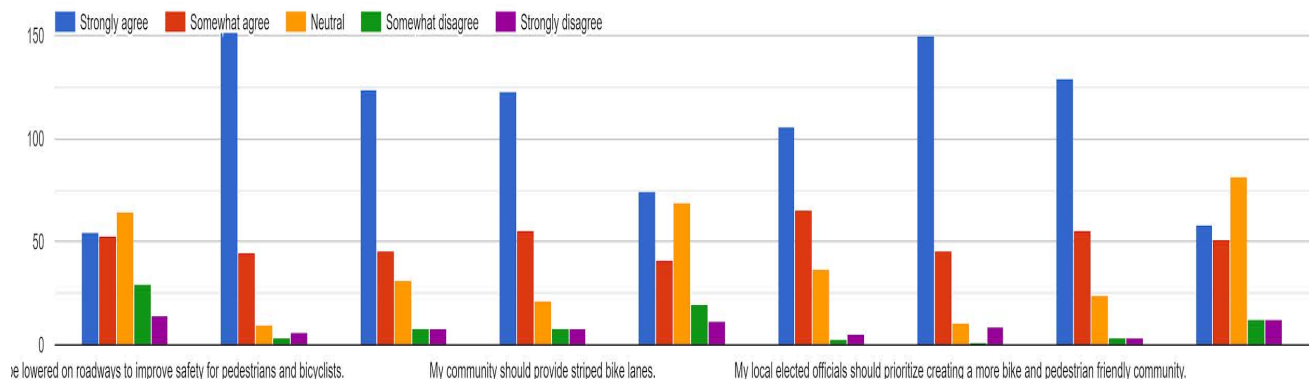


- School is too far away (greater than 2 miles from my home).
- I have too many belongings to bring to...
- There is too much vehicle traffic durin...
- There are no safe bike lanes or paths...
- I take a bus.
- I prefer to be driven in a personal vehi...
- Safety fears
- I own a bike but do not know how to ri...
- My school does not have sufficient bik...

Biking in My Community

A series of statements were asked for respondents to consider when thinking specifically about their community. Respondents selected strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree to denote their level of agreement with each statement.

When thinking about your community how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Respondents **strongly agreed** their community should provide the following:

- multi-use paths that connect to destinations and other communities
- protected bike lanes so cars and bikes are not sharing the same lane
- striped bike lanes
- traffic signals or crossing beacons at all intersections for pedestrians and bicyclists
- more education on how all users can share the road safely.

They would also like to see their local elected officials prioritize creating a more bike and pedestrian friendly community. And respondents strongly agree their communities should have a committee of diverse residents who work with and inform municipal officials on bike/ped issues.

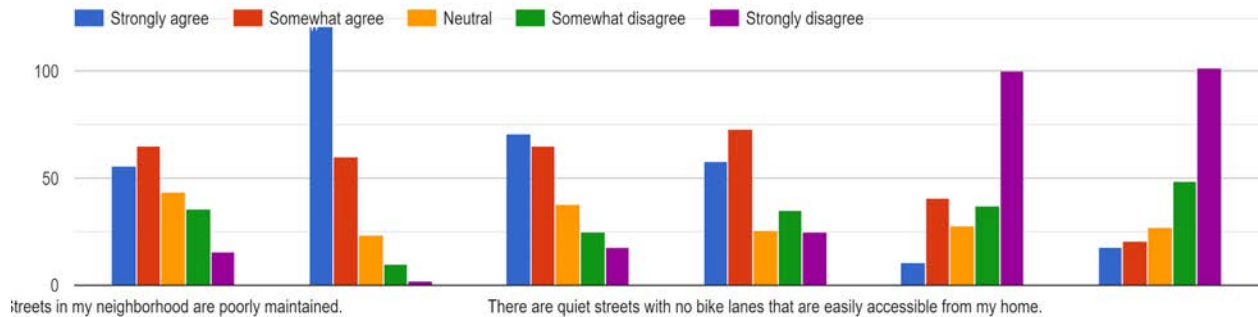
When thinking about their community survey respondents felt **neutral** on the following:

- Traffic speeds should be lowered on roadways to improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- My community should participate in a bike share program.

Biking in My Neighborhood

A series of statements were also asked for respondents to consider when thinking about their own neighborhood. Respondents selected strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree to denote their level of agreement with each statement.

When thinking about your neighborhood how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:



Most respondents **strongly agree** when thinking about their particular neighborhood on the following:

- The majority of drivers exceed posted speed limits in their neighborhood
- There is too much traffic in their neighborhood making biking unpleasant.

Respondents **strongly disagree** when asked about their particular neighborhood on the following:

- There are off street bike paths (paved and unpaved) easily accessible from their neighborhood.
- Bike lanes are not easily accessible from their neighborhood.

Most were **somewhat in agreement** when thinking about their particular neighborhood on the following:

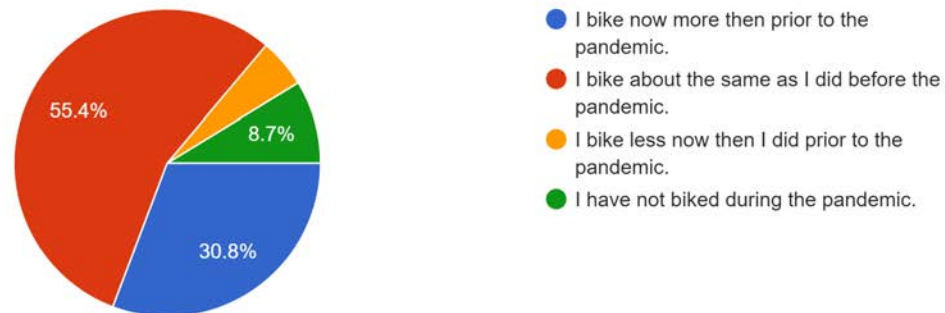
- There are quiet streets with no bike lanes easily accessible from my neighborhood.
- Streets in their neighborhood are poorly maintained.

Biking & the COVID-19 Pandemic

We were interested to learn how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted bike habits for those who do ride.

If you ride a bike how have your bicycle habits changed during the COVID-19 pandemic?

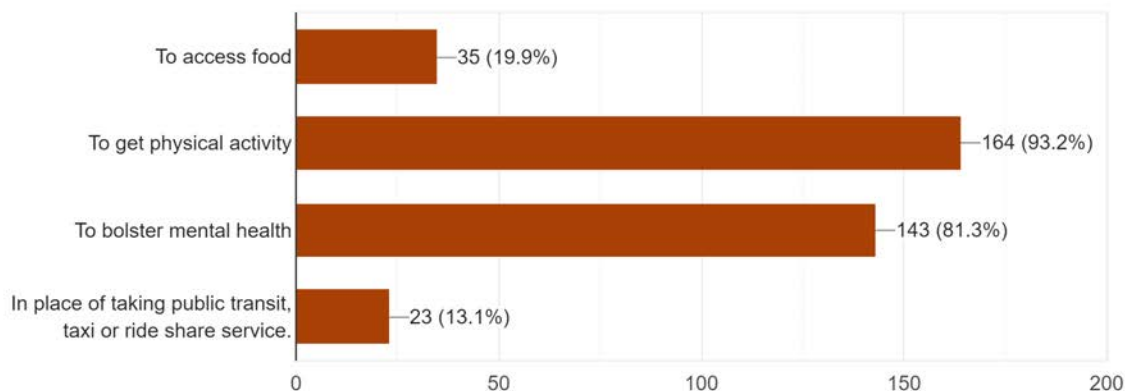
195 responses



Over half of respondents stated they were biking the same amount as pre-pandemic days. Almost a third responded they were biking more now than prior to the pandemic.

If you ride a bike have you biked for any of the of the following purposes during the COVID-19 pandemic? Select all that apply

176 responses



The overwhelming majority of those biking during the pandemic were doing so for physical activity pursuits and to bolster their mental health. A significant number 19.9% reported biking to access food and 13.1% were biking in place of taking public transit or taxi/ride share services during the pandemic.

Community Forums & Public Comments

Over the course of the late summer and fall of 2020 The Gloucester Daily Times newspaper reported on bike topics including the grant awarded Cape Ann Mass in Motion by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health with technical assistance from MassBike. The media attention generated a lot of feedback from area residents who reached out to Jennifer Donnelly, Cape Ann Mass in Motion Grant Coordinator.

In November and December of 2020 a series of virtual community forums were held for the Cape Ann communities. The purpose of the forums was for the public to learn more about Cape Ann Mass in Motion, our “ Bike Friendly Communities” strategy work and to gather public input on biking in their community. A forum was held for each of the four communities bringing an array of people from college students to older adults. In addition to residents some who participated in the forums were municipal staff and committee members. Gloucester, Essex and Manchester communities all had participants attend their respective virtual forum while Rockport had no participants.

Feedback received from the general public both through those who reached out via email and phone calls and from those who participated in the virtual community forums is compiled below.

- **Kent Circle** - Space and a right of way should be provided for cyclists to ride against the one-way traffic or other adjustments should be looked at for this short section of road. A cyclist traveling north on 127 from Stage Fort Park and turning left to go north on 133 finds the intersection is broad, busy, and dangerous. The left turn leaves the cyclist very exposed. Cars on 127 are often going a bit fast, and those coming south from Blynman are usually accelerating. Vehicles at the stop sign on 133 are typically jockeying for their opening to make the turn onto 127.
- **Nautilus Road** - signage is needed so cyclists and vehicles know where to go. Traveling north along the backshore on Atlantic Road, when one nears Bass Rocks, Atlantic Road veers left. However, cyclists and pedestrians are permitted to continue straight and move against the one-way traffic on Nautilus Road. This is a favorite route for many cyclists. It's also a great place for people to park their cars and look out over the beach. When a cyclist rides against the flow on Nautilus, it's hard to figure whether to pass on the left or right side of the moving traffic. Passing on their left puts the cyclist between them and the parking spaces they are looking for (and car doors). Passing on their right removes the cyclist from between the cars, but is contrary to expectations and requires that the cyclist cross back over to the other side of the road when one reaches Blue Shutters Hotel where two-way traffic resumes. Confounding all this is that everyone really just wants to look at Good Harbor Beach rather than at traffic.

- **Eastern Avenue** - coming off the hill and merging where some pizza delivery drivers park in the bike lane and often open car doors without looking is dangerous. Accounts of youth and others who have been “doored” in this area.
- **Hespers Avenue** - was repaved and widened during the pandemic. What was once a slow, shady road is now no longer due to many trees that were cut down and poison ivy has grown in place of the trees. The avenue is now faster too for cars with no painted bike lanes and a narrow shoulder. Prior to these changes it was a pleasant spot to bike.
- **Lower Rogers & Bass Ave-** conditions are deplorable for bikers - so unsafe.
- Safety in Gloucester is a concern. There should be a group that identifies hazards in the city and collectively brings these to the attention of DPW and Mass DoT.
- “My kids and I ride regularly. It scares us every time our kids take off on their own but they relish the independence.”
- “Why did DPW put large sharrows in the middle of lanes instead of refreshing the existing bike lanes and smaller sharrows?”
- “I’d like to get lines painted in the rotaries. I’ve called the state, the mayor and DPW. Someone is going to be seriously injured in the rotaries.”
- Can “fat bikes” be allowed on Gloucester beaches?
- Gloucester DPW should connect more with the community so residents are aware of projects and there should be a way for residents to provide feedback on additional projects that could be undertaken.
- Some residents will not ride bikes in Gloucester due to fear because of traffic and poor road conditions.
- Gloucester’s dense city center provides an abundance of goods and services, which means cyclists can take care of varied errands, often with a short distance.
- In 2016 Gloucester adopted and gained State approval of its Complete Streets policy. The Policy calls on all departments, especially DPW, to take the complete streets methodology into account when embarking on road and other transportation projects. This approach asks what do people need to transit a roadway; it is notably about much more than cars. I am unaware of DPW following the process for soliciting public input. I believe that’s because they have no resources for public engagement.

- Cycling is important to local commerce. We have an e-bike shop, and there is a bike distributor based in Gloucester (Zize Bikes). Beauport Hotel and other lodgings have bikes for their guests. From late spring through autumn, Gloucester is a wildly popular destination for out-of-town cyclists, many of whom spend money in town for coffee, meals, lodging, and more. It seems the City might want to recognize and grow this commercial niche.
- “It’s pretty clear some bike riders have no idea what the rules of the road are especially at the crosswalks “
- “ I’m so glad Gloucester is taking a close look at the potential for more bike-riding.
- **Beach Street** - This is designated a “scenic byway” and should be slow. This area is regulated by the state and this needs to be brought to their attention.
- Expand the Rockport Police Department bike rodeo to include safety and instruction for adults too!
- **School Street** - particularly north of Lincoln Street there there should be a bike path/lane. School Street south of Hidden Drive is narrow and bike sharrows and signage might be the best that can be done in this area. School Street is very important in signaling to motorists that cyclists are a respected part of transportation in Manchester.
- Promote the rules for bikers on the road especially where there are no lanes set apart for bikes to travel.
- “I just got back from my usual death-defying 19 mile ride of the Cape Ann loop. Conditions on lower Rogers & Bass Ave. in particular are deplorable - so unsafe.”
- “Much of the year I commute by bicycle from Gloucester to Marblehead and enjoy cycling recreationally around the Cape during the summer months. Though the Cape provides some amazing opportunities for cycling, the infrastructure is lacking.”
- It would be great to be able to travel by bike around Cape Ann, and I hope it continues to be safe and growing especially as our population density goes up.
- “Route 127 & 127A need to be addressed for biking. Cape Ann would become a bike destination if there was a separate path for bikes and pedestrians on these corridors. It needs to be a pitch for economic benefits too as well as physical fitness.”

- “I noticed the survey had questions about vehicle speed which is obviously important, however in my opinion vehicle proximity (distance from rider) and pavement surface are more important. Poor road surface requires a rider to focus on the road immediately in front of them and cracks, holes, and debris requires the rider to bob and weave. Narrow roads, no or poor shoulders and vehicles passing far too close is a recipe for disaster!”
- “Safer roads enjoyed by more cyclists would be a wonderful thing!!”
- More “Share the Road” signs should be posted in all the communities.
- Some residents are afraid to ride a bike in Gloucester due to traffic congestion and poor road conditions.
- More awareness and enforcement of hands free law needs to be done.
- State Road 127 is notorious for speeders. The stretch between Beverly Farms and Manchester is very hazardous and this section should be repaved versus just re-covering potholes. A community forum participant who lived near this area said even though they are under 2 miles from school they and their children will not bike to school or in this area due to dangerous conditions. Others said 35 mph around Sweeney Park in Manchester is much too fast for that area and dangerous.
- Some residents pointed to a Mass DoT study that was done several years ago looking at 127 on Cape Ann. Mass DoT decided to focus efforts on the stretch between Gloucester and Rockport but was then unable to proceed with any work. People would like their to be re-engagement with Mass DoT to look at these areas again.
- Shoulders along Route 22 in Essex are in really rough shape or non-existent and force cyclists onto the road, in traffic.
- Many feel drivers are unaware of the actual rights of cyclists and feel education is needed in this area. Suggestions to connect with drivers education programs.
- Some in Essex are interested in having a trail to connect with Manchester.
- Other than sharrows there is no bike infrastructure in Manchester.
- Many reported avoiding riding in downtown corridors of all communities due to drivers opening car doors without looking and the injury potential for cyclists.
- Older adults are the largest population of Cape Ann and some mentioned the Councils on Aging could provide a venue for programming on biking without age.

- There is not a safe way to get to many natural resources via bike on Cape Ann. One example people pointed to was trails like Gordon Woods and beaches.
- Many would like to see lane widths modified in certain areas as making the roads more narrow would force vehicle drivers to go slower. Some commented that there are some roads in Manchester that are far too wide and speed is an issue.
- More infrastructure is needed for biking to MBTA stations. Some would like to see a bike share located at train stations.
- Many residents expressed they would like to see their community do more Complete Streets work.
- Local businesses could consider having a bike tool station that cyclists can use. This may serve as a meeting point for cyclists and spur some business for the establishment.



Narrow, no shoulder, no bike lane, vehicles often speed heavily travelled connecting Gloucester & Rockport.



Along a scenic route no bike lanes or signage, parked cars on shoulder and in the driving lane.



Wide driving lane area, along scenic route, no bike lanes or signage.



Scenic and popular area for those who bike with hazardous road conditions.



Do community members know the photo on the left is the same as the photo on the right? Both are examples of bike racks found on Cape Ann. Are bike racks in all needed locations?

WikiMap Data

In addition to our google form survey we also employed the use of WikiMaps as another tool to gather specific information from community members. The WikiMap allowed respondents to map out routes they currently ride in the region and routes they would like to ride. Individuals were asked to mark destinations and also locations where they experienced barriers to biking. Finally we asked respondents to mark on the map locations in the communities which would be best for bike share stations if their community was to decide to ever participate in one.

A total of 83 respondents provided this additional feedback via our WikiMap. We are currently working to see how we can best utilize this data to make it available publicly. An overview map showing destinations, barriers and bike share locations is included in this report as an example. We are working to try and take these individual responses to create one map which will show the most commonly travelled routes along with the routes most requested that individuals want safe bike access for. This information will be helpful to our communities when prioritizing future bike infrastructure work.



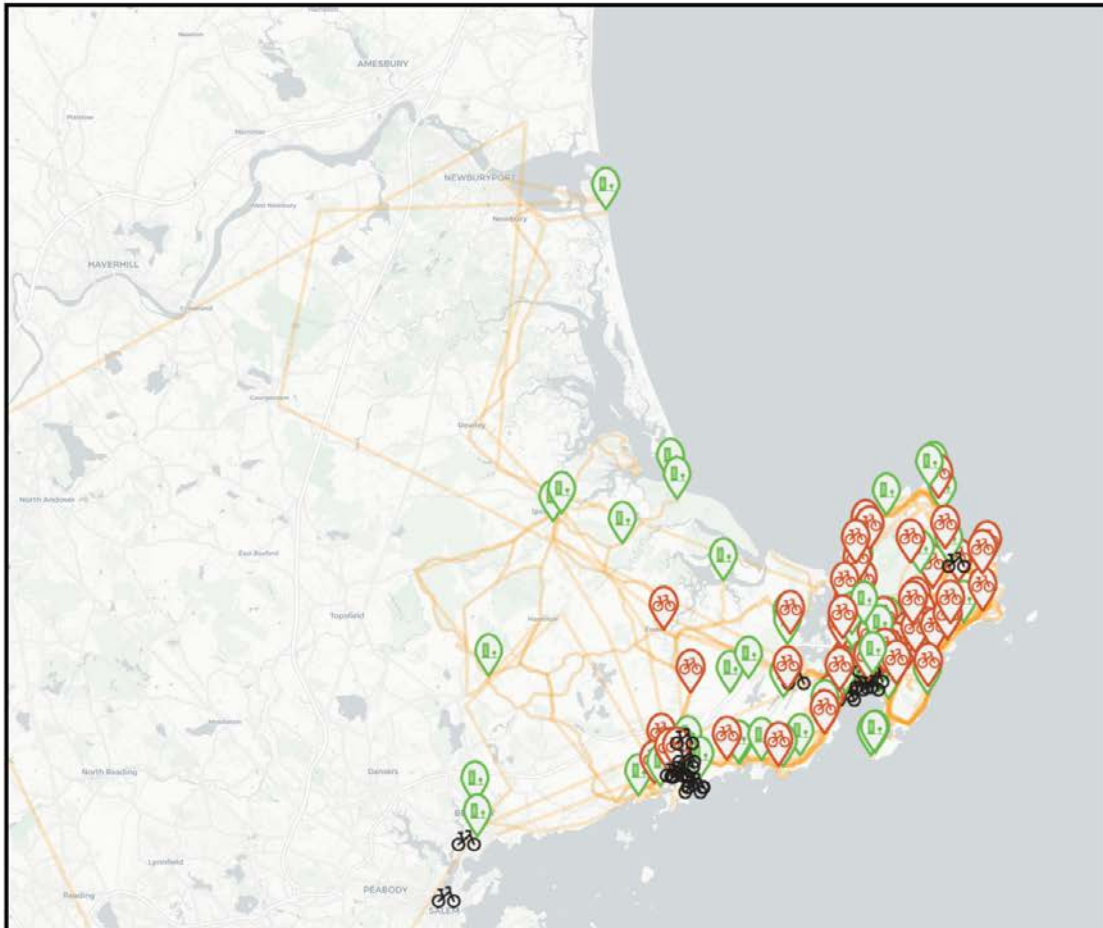
What will make it easier to bike on Cape Ann?

- Route I bike
- Route I would like to bike

Barrier to bicycling

Destination

Good spot for bikeshare



Overview map

03/25/2021

Conclusion

There are some definitive common themes which have arisen from our community forums, survey and additional feedback received from Cape Ann residents. These common themes will be shared with each community serving to better inform the direction that Cape Ann Mass in Motion takes on future work supporting bike friendly communities initiatives.

The desire for multi-use trails/paths that connect the communities with one another and to destinations is a major area of interest by those in the region. Individuals would like ways to safely get to destinations in their own city/town and neighboring communities by biking or walking. Such trails could be helpful in reducing vehicle traffic congestion and the environmental impact from automobiles. Numerous studies also point to the increase in property value in communities with multi-use trails and the increased tax revenue seen from patronage of local businesses in bike friendly communities.

Multi-use trails/paths can have a positive impact on the health of residents of our communities providing for more physical activity opportunities along with cleaner air due to decreased vehicle emissions. Those who do not have access to a personal vehicle either by choice or financial hardship, trails/paths can provide a safe way for them to get to destinations such as jobs, places to access food and many community services. Having multi-use trails may also be helpful in increasing school attendance by providing another safe option for getting to school. Multi-use trails/paths offering safe routes can have a positive impact on childhood obesity rates and mental health offering an opportunity for physical activity in a child's day. For adults, studies link health benefits from access to multi-use trails/paths having positive impacts on rates of chronic disease, obesity and mental health among community residents. During the COVID-19 pandemic we saw firsthand how important our community outdoor spaces were for residents to have a safe place to recreate as some lockdown restrictions were lifted over time.

Hazardous road conditions are another area of universal concern among residents. There is some challenge with addressing this issue as several roadways in the region are state roads and maintenance and improvements fall to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation. One such state governed area of concern is the popular Route 127 & 127A sections which also serve to connect numerous communities with each other and other North Shore neighbors. A concerted advocacy effort with the Mass Department of Transportation along with statewide elected leaders may be beneficial in getting the Commonwealth to start addressing concerns residents have with state roadways in our region.

Local roads whose maintenance falls under the purview of municipalities were also cited as having numerous hazardous concerns, many of which have been previously noted in this report. Overall it is clear residents want there to be more equitable community engagement for all residents when it comes to specific projects in their community that impact streets. Communities are recommended to use best practices in community engagement work and collaborate with partners and those who work with historically underserved residents so their voices are heard. Residents would like systems in place for how to properly communicate road hazard concerns and learn the status of work to be done. More advocacy of local elected officials should also be encouraged for funding projects and their respective departments. Communities are also strongly encouraged to continue participation in grant programs such as Complete Streets and Shared Spaces & Streets.

Communities that do not already have an existing municipal bike/pedestrian committee composed of a diverse body of residents should consider implementation of one. Alternatively a municipality without a bike/ped committee should consider designating an existing appropriate municipal committee to provide guidance, hear resident concerns and better inform such projects to applicable departments such as public works and others. It is strongly encouraged that communities continue participation in Complete Streets, Shared Spaces & Streets and to seek out other grant funding for additional infrastructure improvements. Committees that were once formed for Complete Streets projects by municipalities should be looked to for active re-engagement to continue this work.

Protected bike lanes and more striped bike lanes were also a common theme we heard. We did not find any protected bike lanes in our communities. This would be a preferable way to offer safety for those that bike and may increase participation in biking by many residents. Striped bike lanes were found in a few areas but there is a need for consistent routine upkeep of these. Some examples found of striped bike lanes have the lane between parked cars on one side and vehicle traffic on the other. This poses a safety concern as those in parked cars do not always look carefully before opening doors or even exiting their space. It is recommended before any future bike lanes are created that there is purposeful thought as to the location of bike lanes in relation to where people want/need them to make sure we are equitably serving all residents. Also a maintenance schedule needs to be determined and funding for upkeep identified before new bike lanes are created.

While roadways in some sections of our communities may be too narrow to afford a dedicated bike lane, others are quite wide and would be ideal. The narrowing of the vehicle lanes would help to reduce speeds making the roads safer for all users. This is especially important in areas of congestion, near schools/parks and residential areas. Increased signage across all communities to share the roads and traffic beacons at crosswalks particularly in challenging areas would be welcomed improvements for safety for all.

It is apparent that there is both the need and interest in making our Cape Ann communities more bike friendly. It is recommended that our region work collaboratively towards a bike master plan to better plan, inform any future work that may arise on this topic.

What Can Residents Do

The following are a list of action items that residents of Cape Ann communities may consider as a way to help advance bike friendly communities initiatives in their city or town and the region.

- Obey the rules of the road! Be aware of others who share the roads!
- As taxpayers connect with both local state elected officials to voice support for bike & pedestrian friendly initiatives.
- Advocate for increased funding for departments whose work involves creating and maintaining bike/ped and other infrastructure improvements in their communities.
- Attend municipal meetings to voice your opinion on these matters. Can't attend a meeting? Send an email or make a phone call. All information on meetings and contact info can be found on the website for each community or call your city or town hall.
- Reach out to your city/town to see how you might get involved with municipal committees that align with bike friendly topics such as bike/ped, traffic, open space & recreation, environmental issues, health and equity to name a few.
- Get involved in advocacy groups such as [MassBike](#).
- Support Safe Routes to School in your school community or ask that your school get involved.
- Learn more about [Massachusetts Vision Zero Coalition](#) and get involved.
- Stay involved with Cape Ann Mass in Motion by reaching out to Grant Coordinator Jennifer Donnelly at jdonnelly@gloucester-ma.gov.
- Look at your daily routines and find small ways you can incorporate the use of other modes of transportation whether biking, walking or public transit.
- Learn your communities reporting system for concerns with local roads.
- Request that your community provide equitable opportunities for residents to learn about potential projects involving infrastructure improvements, provide a mechanism for residents to provide feedback to better inform the work and a process for keeping the public updated on status of work.
- Share with neighbors and friends in your community why you feel bike friendly communities initiatives are important for your city/town and the Cape Ann region.
- Share positive comments and thanks when you come across improvements to bike/ped infrastructure that your community has made.



What Can Cape Ann Mass in Motion Do?

As a coalition that supports and advocates for policy, systems and environmental changes around topics of active living to increase the health status of all residents, Cape Ann Mass in Motion may consider the following action steps as a way to help advance bike friendly initiatives in the region.

- Share this report and information with local residents, municipal staff and leaders.
- Currently many of our municipalities are undergoing other large scale projects with a planning focus. There is interest from communities for a collaborative bike master plan but at a later date after current projects are further along or completed. Continue discussions with municipal staff so this stays a priority on their radar for when the time is right.
- Provide additional education and awareness campaigns around topics such as hands free law, no idling and sharing the road for all users.
- Support efforts of local bike/ped committees and advocate with officials for funding and infrastructure improvements.
- Provide support to grant applications where dollars may be leveraged for active transportation topics.
- Continue collaboration with the Safe Routes to School Program and make sure all schools in each of our districts are signed up, actively engaged in the program and utilizing free resources available to them. Support efforts for each district or community to have a Safe Routes Task Force.
- Work with partners to create walking and biking routes and maps to make available to community members in areas where this does not exist.
- Support efforts on safe biking other partners and groups are involved in. Connect the Children's Hospital Injury Prevention team to provide additional resources and education.
- Provide continued information to businesses through the Cape Ann Chamber of Commerce on positive impacts bike friendly initiatives on the local economy, tourism and workforce.
- Continue to work closely with Mass in Motion technical advisors such as Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), MassBike, WalkBoston and Watson Active on active transportation topics. Work with technical advisors to open a dialogue with Mass DoT about state roadways of concern in the region and advocate for the state to address concerns.
- Encourage communities to take advantage of services provided through Mass in Motion advisors at no cost to communities such as walk audits, bike rodeos, school curriculum, advocacy, additional resources and connection.
- Continue to publicize, educate and share information relating to bike friendly communities to build capacity in the region as we work towards a bike master plan.

