

SEEKONK BIKEWAY INITIATIVE



SEEKONK PLANNING BOARD

TOWN OF SEEKONK

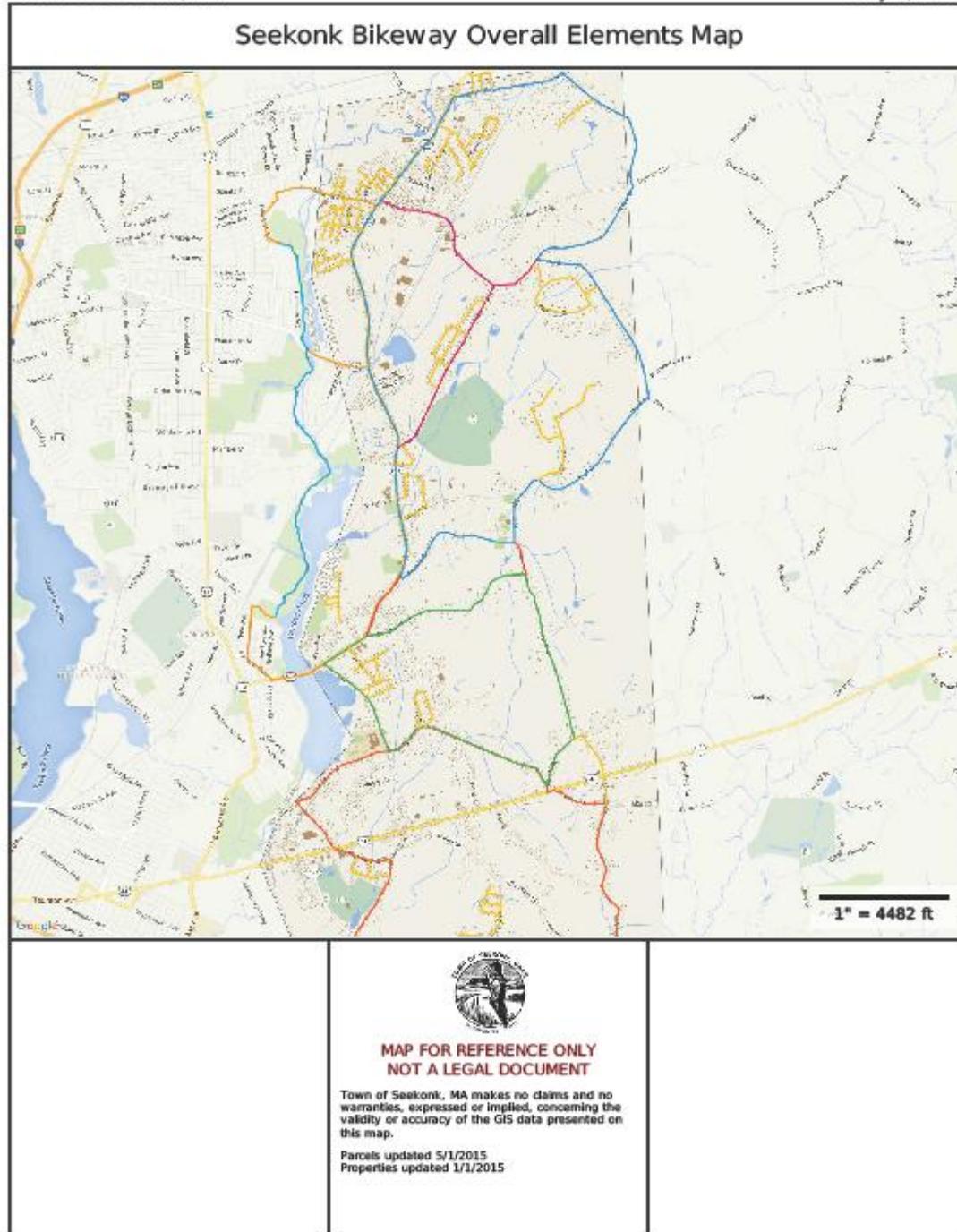
MASSACHUSETTS

MAY 2016

The Seekonk Bikeway

Town of Seekonk, MA

May 9, 2016



Legend

- - Seekonk Townwide Loop
- - Central Seekonk Loop
- - North Seekonk Loop
- - Connector routes
- - South Seekonk Loop
- - Neighborhood Loops

The Seekonk Bikeway

OVERVIEW

The **Seekonk Bikeway** is a town-wide system of linked bike routes, loops and paths intended to provide:

- Increased education, awareness and safety to riders and drivers through bikeway signage, traffic controls, bike-related supportive programs and special events, and additional consideration for cycling issues in infrastructure and new development projects.
- Linkages between Seekonk's neighborhoods, community services and sites, commercial areas, surrounding communities, and regional and interstate bike path systems such as: South Coast Bikeway, Swansea Bikeway, Attleboro Adult Bike Route, Ten Mile River Bike Path and East Bay Bike Path.
- Increased recreational opportunities for the residents of the Town and visitors through the designation of specific bike routes throughout the Town of Seekonk.
- Increased economic development opportunities for tourism through the creation and marketing of the bikeway to cyclists from outside of Seekonk.
- Reduced vehicular traffic and congestion by providing a means of alternate transit to the resident of the town.
- Improve access to funding sources for bikeway or related projects through cooperative efforts with other municipalities and agencies; as well as, inclusion and integration of the bikeway with regional, state, and federal bicycle planning efforts.

The **Seekonk Bikeway** is comprised of a number of types of routes each with its own particular character and designation and totaling over 53 miles of designated bikeways. The different bikeway elements range from neighborhood loops intended primarily for use by those living in the neighborhood; to connections to regional bike paths intended to connect Seekonk's riders with neighboring communities within and outside of the Commonwealth. The five categories of bike routes within the bikeway are:

- Neighborhood Loops
- Area Loops
- Town-wide Loop
- Town Connectors Routes
- Regional Bike Path Connectors

A description of each of these elements of the **Seekonk Bikeway** with maps showing their locations and descriptions of their character, intended use, and proposed signage and traffic controls follows, together with a discussion of the proposed implementation process.

This document is intended as an initial starting point and all aspects should be considered malleable at this conceptual stage. However, the bikeway is being presented as a complete, integrated system of connected bike routes throughout the Town. Further public review and discussion of the initiative, as well as, coordination with Town Bodies and departments, State and regional agencies (in Massachusetts and Rhode Island) and neighboring communities will be required to fully implement the initiative.

The Seekonk Bikeway

Any particular element, while linked to the overall bikeway, can be implemented independent of any other element. Thus the initiative readily lends itself to a phased implementation of a unified program and gives the town the ability to identify and seek funding for that implementation in a similar phased and scalable manner. Adoption of the draft plan by the Town and support for its inclusion in regional and state bicycle planning efforts will facilitate and support access to such funding sources.

GENERAL LAW PROVISIONS

A number of Massachusetts General Law provisions address cyclists and bikeways within the Commonwealth. A few of the most pertinent to the **Seekonk Bikeway** initiative are presented below.

Under the General Law of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts cyclists are granted a “right to use all public ways in the commonwealth except limited access highways” (90 MGL § 1) and are granted additional protection by 90 MGL § 14 which provides that:

“In approaching or passing a person on a bicycle the operator of a motor vehicle shall slow down and pass at a safe distance and at a reasonable and proper speed.”

Thus, within the Commonwealth, a “right to bike” exists on all roadways except limited access highways. Efforts to designate and establish bikeways are a way to protect, support, and enhance this right.

Regarding the establishment and designation of “bikeways” within the Commonwealth; Massachusetts General Law grants authority to both municipalities and the Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development.

40 MGL §§ 21 and 16B provide that Towns may, “for the purpose of designating areas upon public streets to be used as bicycle lanes, and for making such ordinances and By-laws, not repugnant to law, as they may judge most conducive to their welfare, which shall be binding upon all inhabitants thereof and all persons within their limits.” This provision vests the Town of Seekonk with the authority to designate a bikeway as contemplated in the **Seekonk Bikeway** plan.

At the State level Chapter 90E of the General Law addresses bikeways and vests authority for the designation and planning thereof, through the Administrator of Highways, to the Bureau of Transportation Planning and Development within the Division of Highways. This chapter directs the Administrator of Highways to work with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Office of Planning and Programming to establish a bikeway program within the Commonwealth. The Chapter includes a number of specific goals and elements related to the development, safety, and use of bikeways. Chapter 90E also requires the accommodation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic in construction projects undertaken by the Division of Highways (90E MGL §2A) and dictates how federal funds are to be distributed among different types of bikeway projects (90E MGL §3).

MADOT has implemented these directives in three ways. The Bay State Greenway Plan lays out a general statewide plan for a long distance bicycle transportation network. MADOT is also in the process of adopting a design guide for bicycle related roadway and intersection

The Seekonk Bikeway

improvements. Finally in furtherance of the provisions of Chapter 90E, MADOT includes consideration of bicycle related improvements in all infrastructure or other projects undertaken or reviewed by the department.

Regarding the **Seekonk Bikeway** these General Law provisions provide the initial jurisdiction to designate the bikeway and provide a statewide program into which the bikeway can be incorporated and through which funding can be sought. An initial step of this incorporation is the inclusion of the Seekonk Bikeway in the Draft Southeastern Massachusetts Metropolitan Planning Organization Regional Bicycle Plan being prepared through the Southeast Regional Planning and Economic Development District.

SEEKONK BIKEWAY

INTRODUCTION

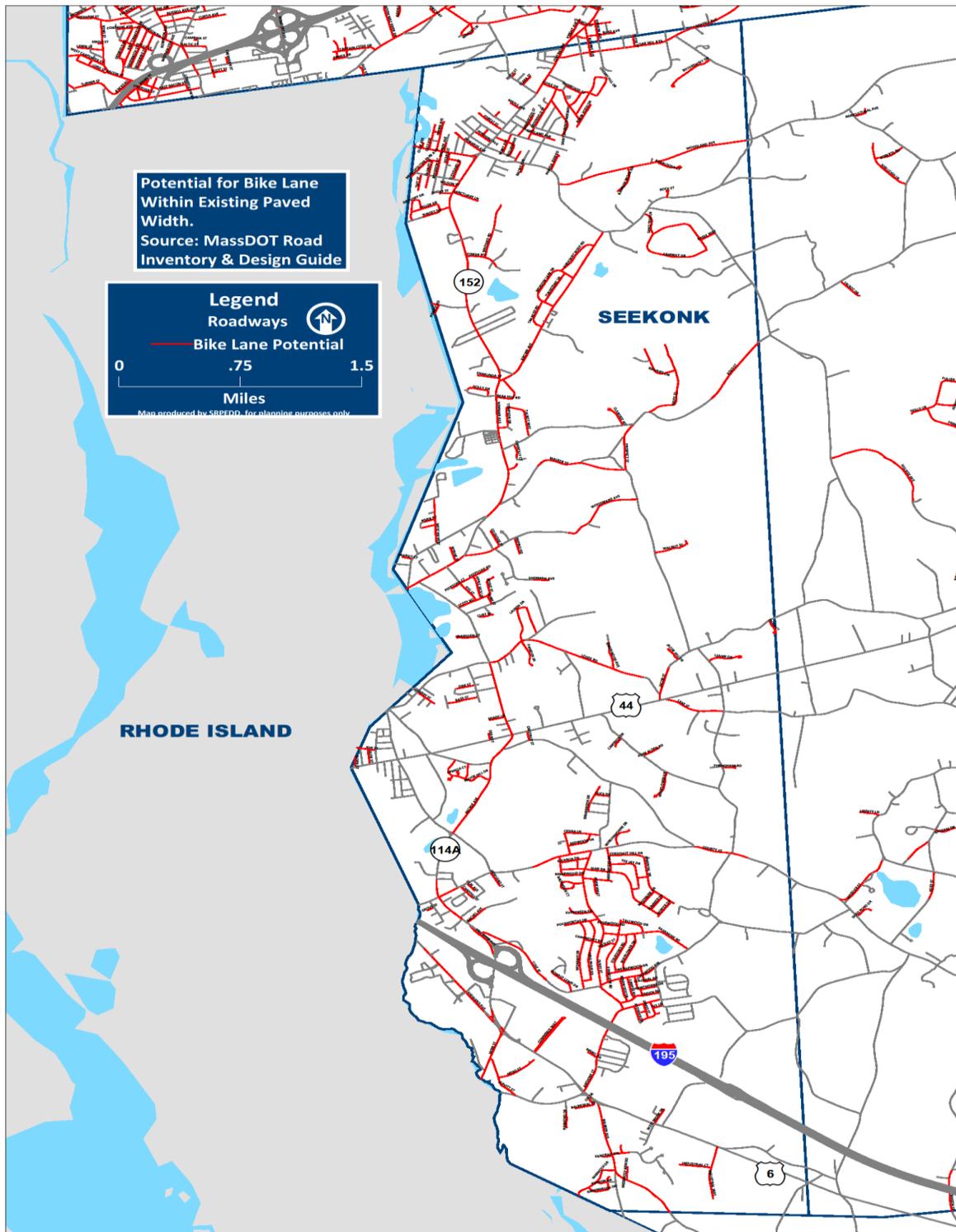
In each of the following subsections the elements of the **Seekonk Bikeway** are presented with a map showing the area comprising the element, a description of the nature of the element (including methods of designation), mileage and identifying the anticipated users. A short discussion of any preliminarily identified issues is also provided. Except for the Neighborhood Loops and Regional Bike Path Connectors each element of the bikeway has been given a color designation and is referred as a “line” of that color.

The descriptions also include breakdowns of how the element fits into a commonly adopted three level classification system for bikeways. Class I bikeways are cycling facilities which are physically separate from vehicular traffic via some barrier (i.e. Ten Mile Bike Path). Class II bikeways are bikeways designated via a striped dedicated bike lane and associated signage and intersection infrastructure. Class III bikeways are bikeways or portions of bikeways in which lane and right of way restrictions result in a shared roadway or “sharrow” between motor vehicles and bicyclists. Sharrows are commonly referred to and signed as “designated bike routes”. While some opportunities exist in Seekonk for future Class I bikeway development; the currently proposed system is primarily comprised of Class II and III bikeways.

The primary resource used in the development of the proposed routes is the map shown on the next page. The map (hereinafter the “MADOT map) was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and identifies the roadways within the Town of Seekonk that are appropriate for the designation of on-road bike lanes. These are shown on the element maps and designated as Class II bikeways. In several instance other roadways not shown on the MADOT are included in the bikeway to provide important connections or sections of loop routes. Where these “Non-MADOT” roadways are incorporated in the element maps they have been classified as Class III bikeways. The proposed routes are presented herein conceptually and further analysis, particularly regarding public safety, both for motorists and cyclists will be required and is anticipated as the process moves forward.

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Figure 1. Massachusetts Department of Transportation Roadway Bike Lane Suitability Map (MADOT map)



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NEIGHBORHOOD LOOPS

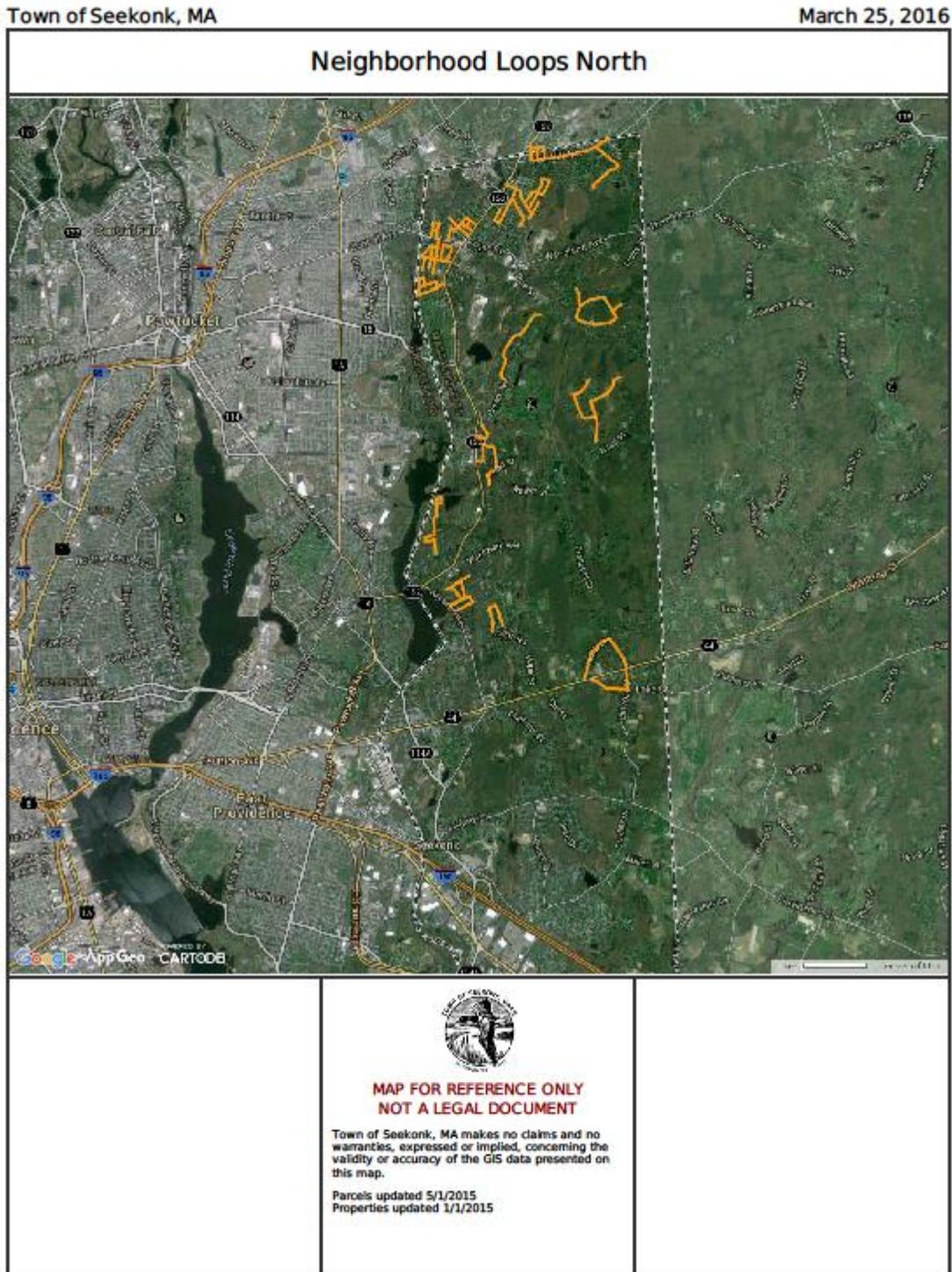
The following map shows the residential neighborhoods in Seekonk that have been identified as appropriate for striped on-road bike lanes per the MADOT map and which lend themselves to looped bicycle routes. These loops, individually and taken together, provide a vehicle for improved cycling connections within and between the Town's residential neighborhoods and the commercial areas, as well as, enhanced cyclist safety within the loops via increased awareness of cyclists through appropriate traffic controls and signage. The length of the loops varies but, for the most part, is less than a mile in each instance. The neighborhood loops are typically Class II and III bikeways. The following link will bring you to the overall bikeway element map showing the neighborhood loops in relation to the other bikeway elements ([Overall Bikeway Elements](#)).

The Neighborhood Loops are primarily intended to serve the residents of the neighborhoods in which they are located but the concentration of several neighborhood loops along Olney Street provide for the opportunity to link those neighborhoods in a "Olney Street super loop". The neighborhood loops are also integrated in the greater bikeway system and allow the residents along the neighborhood loops access to the entire bikeway; providing increased recreational and alternative transit opportunities within the Town.

The primary means of identification for the Neighborhood Loops would be small designation signs that identify the particular loop as a Seekonk Bikeway Neighborhood Loop and perhaps identifying the particular neighborhood in which the loop is located. In some instances a striped on-road bike lane and traffic control signage may be appropriate for public safety purposes. After initiation of the bikeway program a process could be adopted for the review and designation of additional neighborhood loops.

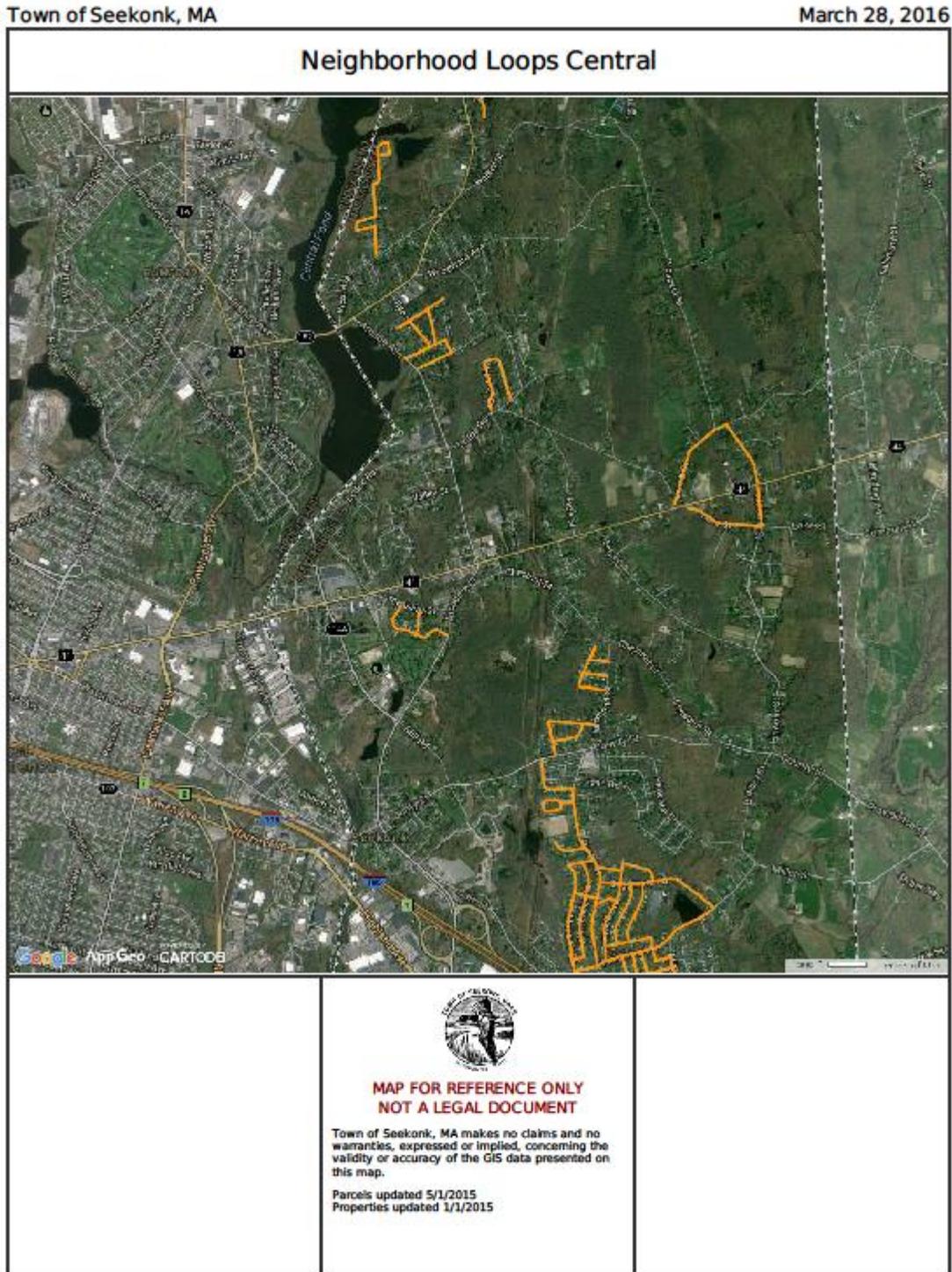
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Figure 2a. Neighborhood Loops North



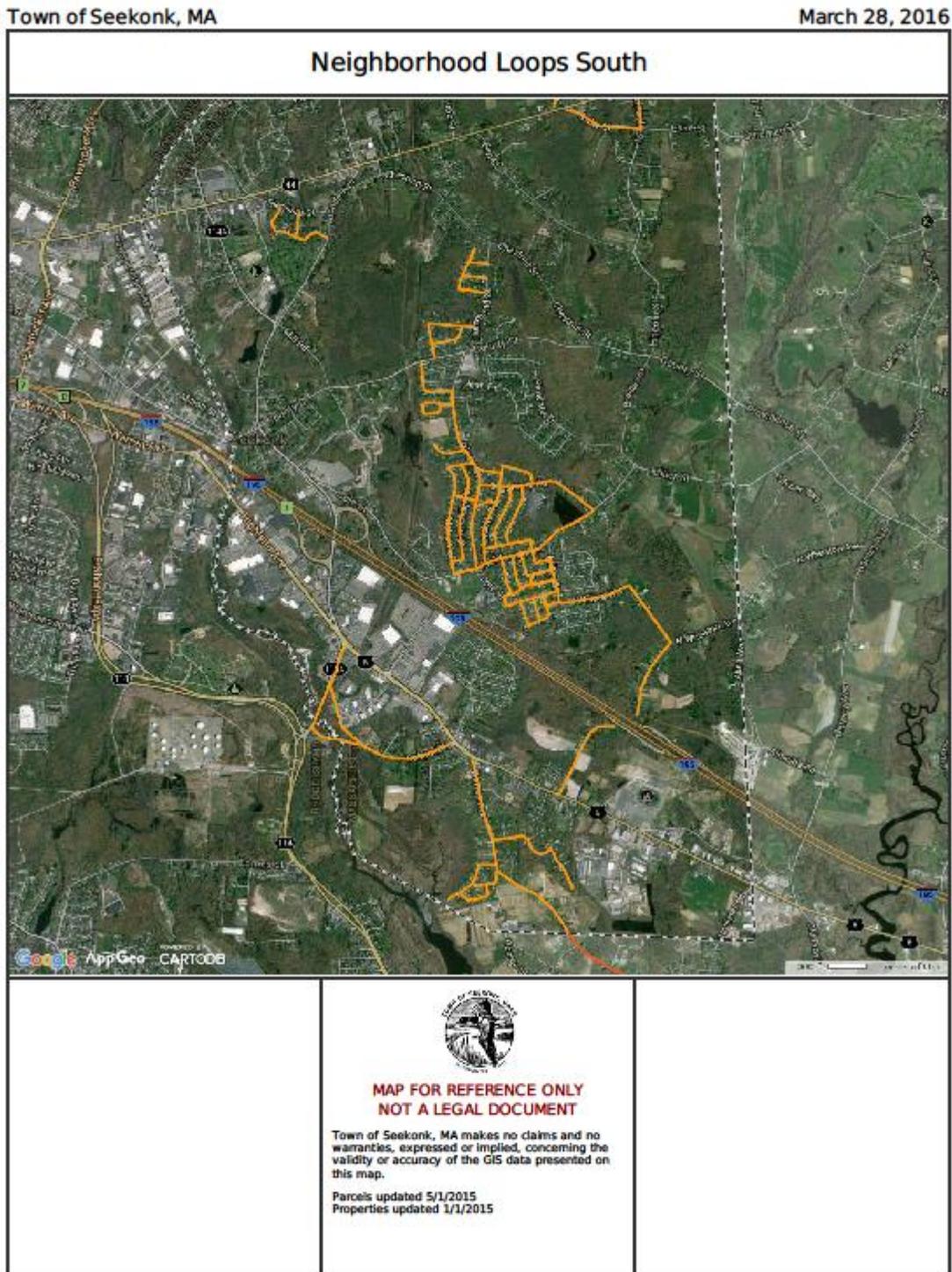
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Figure 2b. Neighborhood Loops Central



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Figure 2c. Neighborhood Loops South



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Figure 2d. Neighborhood Loops: Olney Street



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CONNECTOR ROUTES - THE PINK LINE

The following map shows the connector routes of the **Seekonk Bikeway**. The Seekonk Bike Loop (Red Line) is also shown for the purpose of context. Connector routes are designated as the Pink Line. Connector routes are linear bikeway routes which provide connections between, or access to, other bikeway elements; transect larger elements; provide alternate routing options and may be a part of a larger bikeway element. These routes serve both residents of and visitors to the Town by providing important connections with improved safety between elements of the bikeway. Connector routes provide flexibility in allowing riders to follow a designated route or choose their own route utilizing the Pink Line in conjunction with other bikeway elements. Connector routes also allow riders to enjoy some of the more bucolic sections of Seekonk that speak to the town's agricultural and architectural history. Portions of the Pink Line are incorporated into sections of the Seekonk Bike Loop; North, Central, and Southern Loop routes, the Ten Mile River and East Bay Bike Path Connectors. The identified connector routes with their classification and distances are as follows:

1. Pine Street (III) and Woodland Ave (II) 1.8 miles
2. Brown Avenue (II) 1.3 miles
3. Walker Street (III, II) 1 mile
4. Woodward Avenue (II) 1.2 miles
5. Ledge Road/ Jacob Street (II) 1.6 miles
6. Mill Road (III) and County Street (III) 2.3 miles
7. Olney Street (II) 1 mile
8. Mink/ Leavitt/ School Street (II) 1 mile
9. Anthony Street (II) .66 mile
10. Warren Avenue (II) 1 mile

The Pink Line will be designated with a combination of striped bike lanes, stenciling and signage. Where the width of a street's right of way permits and if needed to ameliorate a safety concern consideration should be given to the installation of short sections of paved Class I bike paths adjacent to and parallel with the roadway along the line. A similar approach can be seen in portions of the Cape Cod bike path system where such paths run along some of the busier roadways and could be incorporated in the **Seekonk Bikeway** where feasible. Opportunities for cyclist/ pedestrian cross connections among some neighborhoods or sections of town utilizing Class I bikeways should also be explored in the and considered in future planning and development efforts.

As the Pink Line generally runs along some of the more popular cut-through streets and well used intersections in Town; particular consideration must be taken in the review of the proposed routes regarding public safety especially where the Pink Line intersects high traffic volume roadways. Additional consideration should be given to public safety concerns also, on those portions of Pink line, per the MADOT map which are not appropriate for striped bike lanes to ensure rider and motorist safety. A final area of particular concern regarding the Pink Line is the portion of the line which runs along Anthony Street. This connector route crosses Route 6/Fall River Avenue and, given the high volume and intensity of traffic on Route 6, warrants careful consideration as regards public safety. The following link will bring you to a map of the Pink and Red Lines ([Pink Line](#))

The Seekonk Bikeway

Figure 3. The Pink Line - Connector Routes (with the Seekonk Town Loop shown)



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AREA LOOPS – THE BLUE, GREEN AND ORANGE LINES

The Area Loop element of the **Seekonk Bikeway** is comprised of three roughly circular bike routes around specific sections of the Town. The routes are shown on the following three maps. The Area Loops are located in the northern, central, southern sections of the Town and are designated as the Blue, Green, and Orange Lines respectively. The Area Loops are generally comprised of portions of other bikeway elements and allow residents and visitors to Town to transit within a section of Town; enjoy some of the more rural vistas of Seekonk accessed by the Pink Line's routes (several of which are incorporated into the three area loops); or to connect to the local, regional or interstate bikeway system.

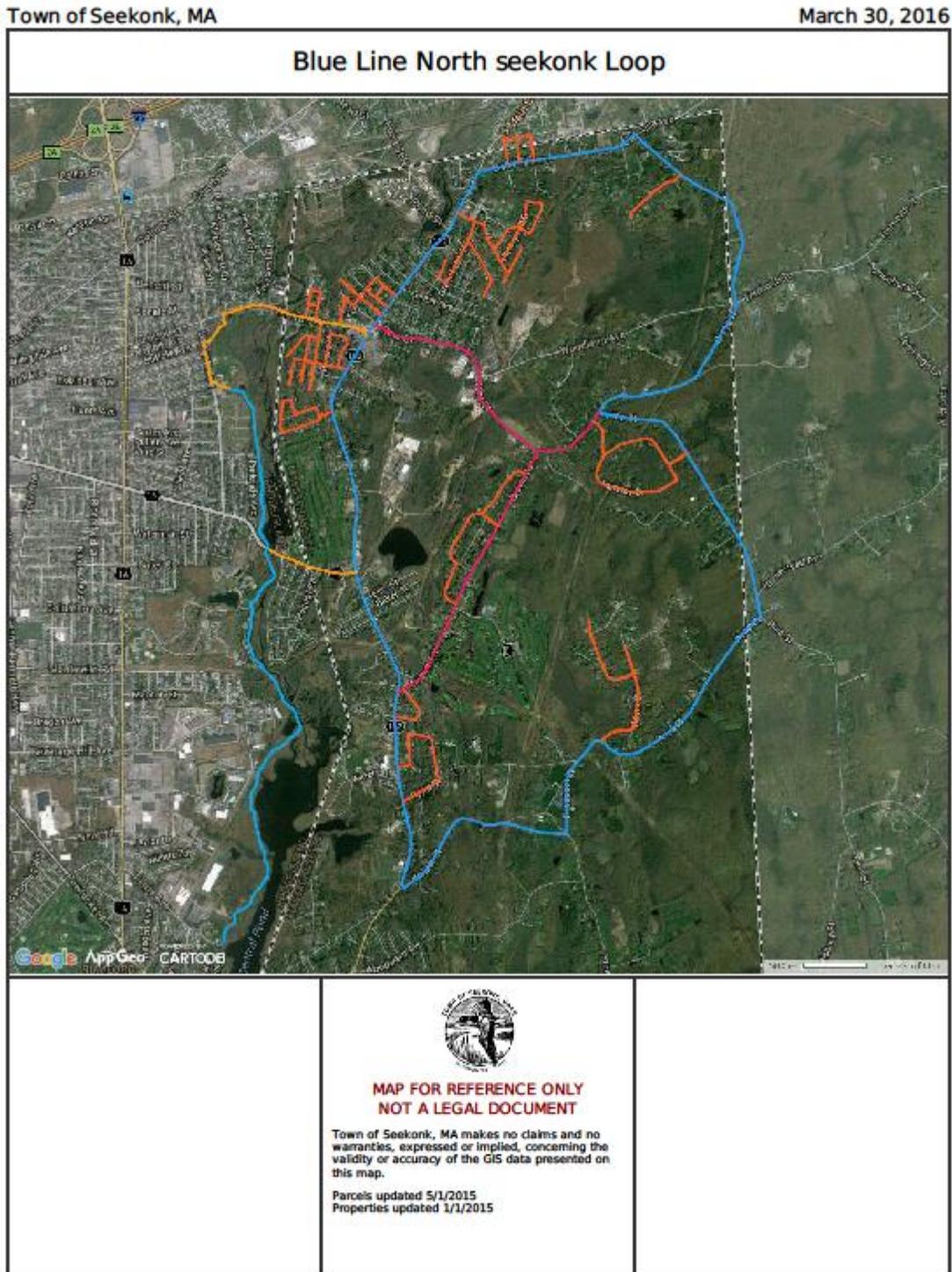
Similar to the Pink Line; the Blue, Orange, and Green Line will be designated by striped on-road bike lanes, stenciling, and signage. Opportunities for parallel paths as discussed above regarding the Pink Line should also be explored and sections which do not lend themselves to on road bike lanes should be given additional attention regarding motorist and cyclist safety. The bikeway classes and mileage breakdown for the area loops is as follows:

1. Blue Line: Class II mileage 5.5, Class III mileage 4.5
2. Green Line: Class II mileage 2.8 , Class III mileage 2.2
3. Orange Line: Class II mileage 4.5, Class III mileage 3.0

The western sections of the three lines utilize portions of Fall River Avenue/Route 114A and Newman Avenue/Route 152 which; while they are designated on the MADOT map as appropriate for striped on-road bike lanes; are roadways subject to significant traffic volume levels. As a result and given these sections of the loop routes are also located primarily on state highways; close coordination with the MADOT and the Town's public safety officials will be needed during the development and implementation stages of this element of the bikeway initiative. As a significant portion of the roadways in the eastern section of the area loops are not appropriate for on-road striped bike lanes; additional attention should be paid to these sections as regards cyclist and motorist safety and the exploration of alternative routes. It should also be noted that two short sections of the blue line extend into Rehoboth and will require coordination with that community. The following links will bring you to maps of the Blue Green and Orange area loops ([Blue Line](#), [Green Line](#), and [Orange Line](#)).

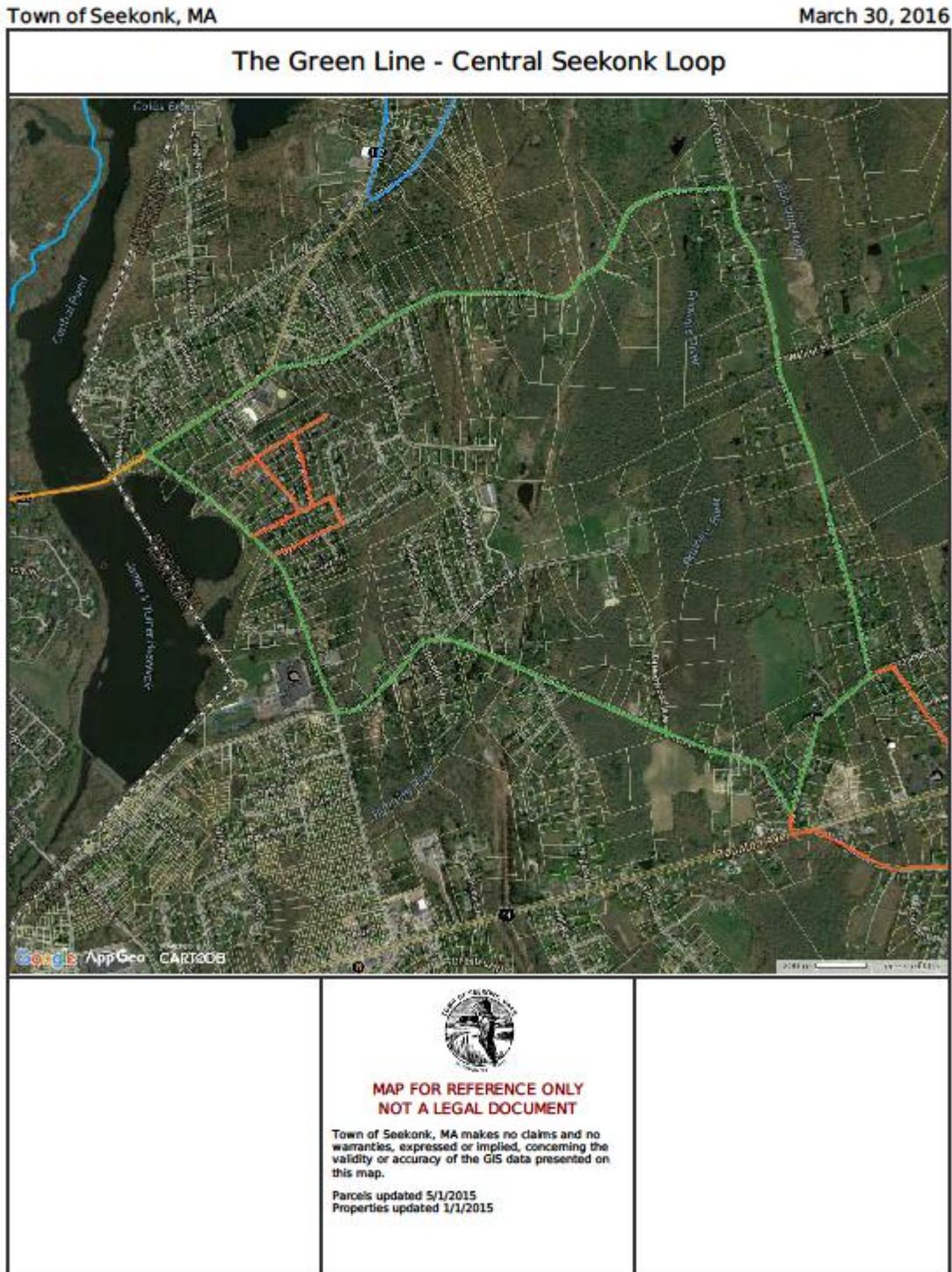
The Seekonk Bikeway

Figure 4. The Blue Line - North Seekonk Loop



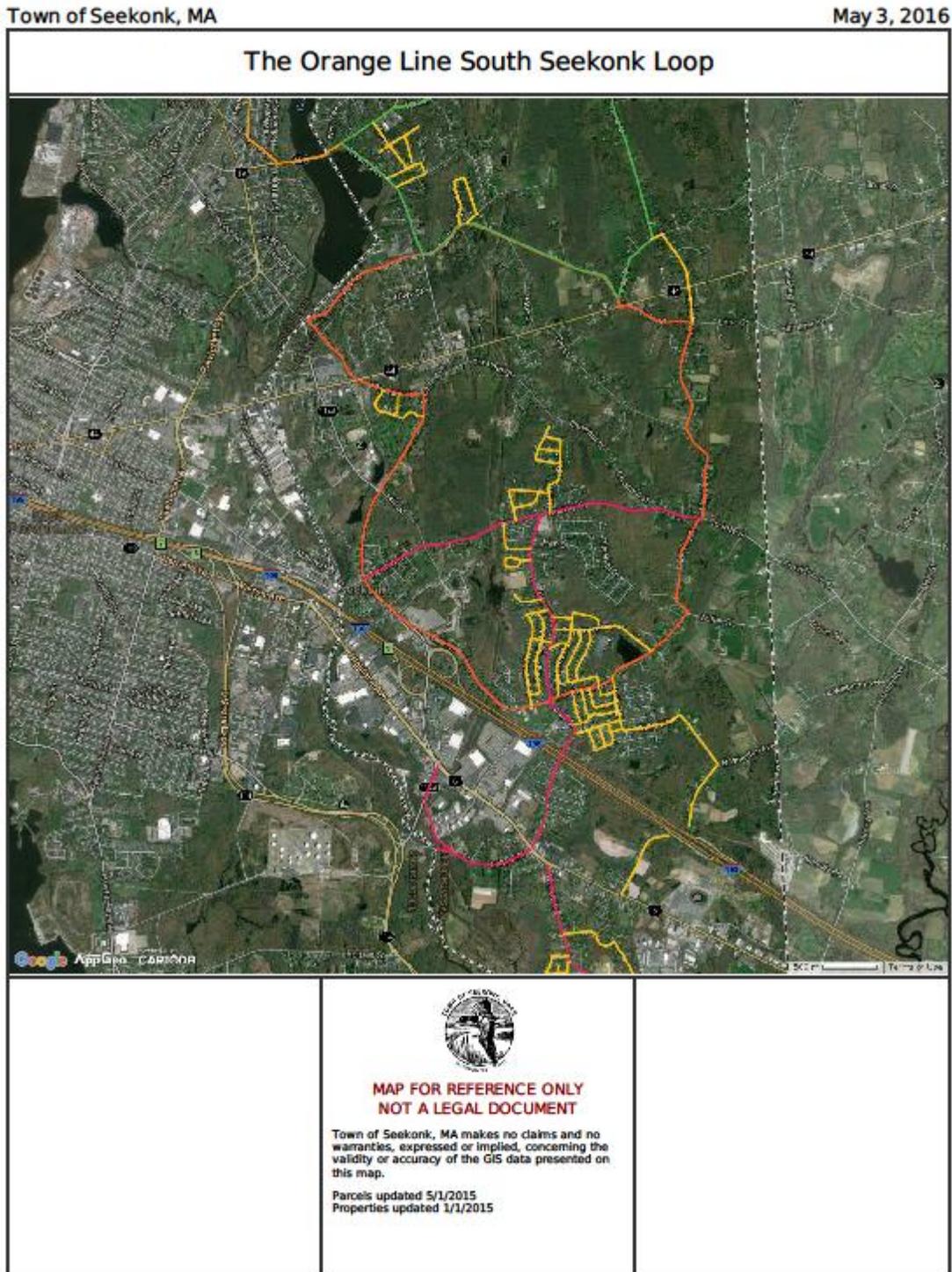
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Figure 5. The Green Line - Central Seekonk Loop



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Figure 6. The Orange Line - South Seekonk Loop



The Seekonk Bikeway

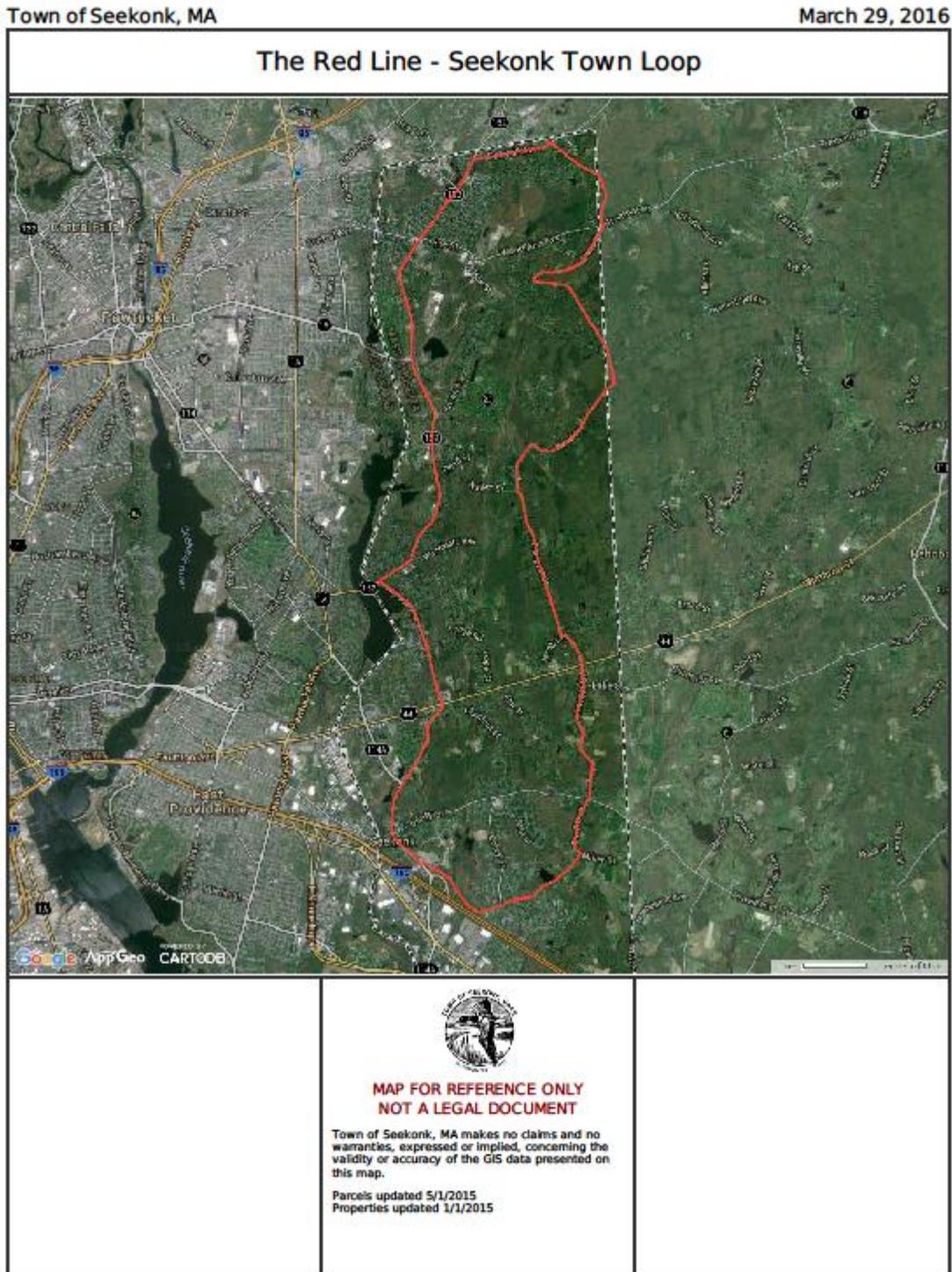
SEEKONK BIKE LOOP - THE RED LINE

The Seekonk Bike Loop or Red Line as it is designated and shown on the following map, is an eighteen mile town wide biking route connecting and encompassing all other bikeway elements. The Pink Line is also shown for contextual purposes. The Red Line, when taken in combination with the other elements, provides for town wide alternate transit access and recreational cycling opportunities for both residents and visitors. The Red Line, or portions thereof, could also provide a readymade route for cycling events and fundraising activities. The Red Line is comprised of 8.5 miles of Class II bikeway and 9.5 miles of Class III bikeway.

Similar to the Connector Routes and Area Loops the Red Line will be designated via signage, stenciling, and striped on-road bike lanes where appropriate. Most of the roadways along the eastern section of the Red Line are not appropriate for on-road striped bike lanes and thus additional attention should be paid to these sections as regards cyclist and motorist safety and the exploration of alternative routes. The western sections of the Red Line utilizes portions of Fall River Avenue/Route 114A and Newman Avenue/Route 152 which; while they are designated on the MADOT map as appropriate for striped on-road bike lanes; are roadways subject to significant traffic volume levels. As a result and given this section of the Red Line is also located primarily on state highways; close coordination with the MADOT and the Town's public safety officials will be needed during the development and implementation stages of this element of the bikeway initiative. The following link will bring you to a map of the Red Line Town wide loop ([Red Line](#))

The Seekonk Bikeway

Figure 7. The Red Line - Seekonk Town Loop (with Connector routes shown)



The Seekonk Bikeway

REGIONAL BIKE PATH CONNECTORS

A final element of the **Seekonk Bikeway** is shown on the following maps. Connections to existing regional bike paths are depicted with the regional bike paths shown in blue, the proposed connector in orange and nearby **Seekonk Bikeway** elements shown in the colors previously identified in this plan. As these connectors run through other municipalities and some connect to bike paths under the jurisdiction of the State of Rhode Island; close coordination with those communities (Swansea, Attleboro, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Barrington), as well as, the Rhode Island Departments of Transportation and Environmental Management and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation will be necessary.

The first two Regional Bike Path connectors link the **Seekonk Bikeway** to the Ten Mile River Bike Path located in East Providence and Pawtucket, Rhode Island. Access to the northern portion of the Ten Mile River Bike Path is provided via Route 15/Brook Street-Armistice Boulevard. Access to the southern terminus of the Ten Mile River Bike Path is provided via Arcade and Newman Avenues in Seekonk and Bishop and Ferris Avenues in East Providence. A connection such as this is identified specifically in the Draft SMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan.

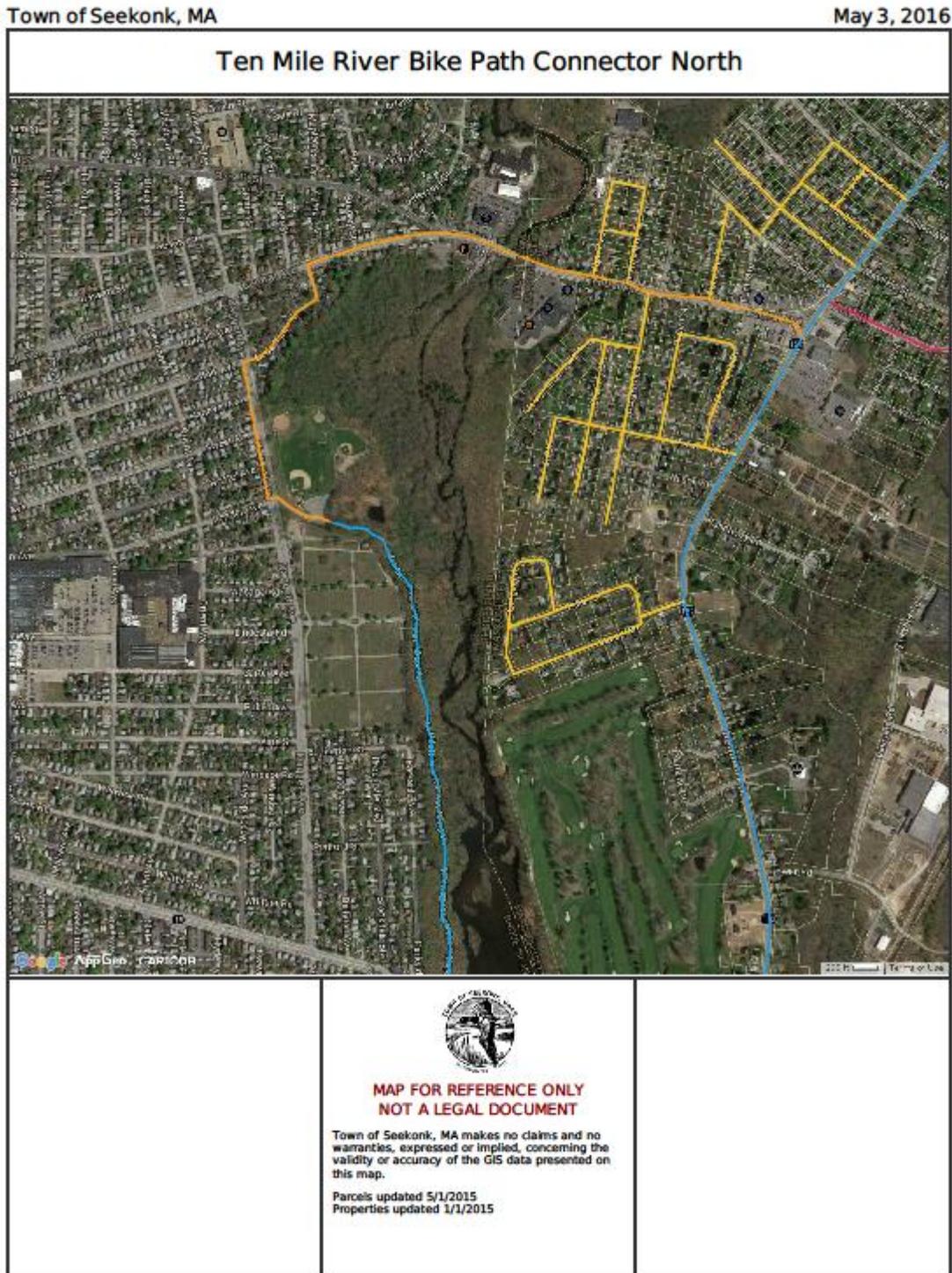
The third connection is to the East Bay Bike Path utilizing an existing on road spur of the path on New Meadow Road (Swansea, Massachusetts) and Sowams Road (Barrington, Rhode Island). This spur intersects with the East Bay Bike Path near County Road, Barrington, Rhode Island. From that point riders can proceed either south through Barrington, Warren, and Bristol or north through East Providence, and Providence, whose designated on road bike routes ultimately link with the Blackstone River Bike Path in Pawtucket, Lincoln, Cumberland, and Woonsocket connecting the **Seekonk Bikeway** to a truly regional cycling network. As this connection runs through Swansea, the opportunity to connect the Swansea and Seekonk bikeway systems also exists.

A final area connection would be to the Attleboro adult bike route via Central Avenue. Similar to Swansea, such a connection would also link riders in the two communities.

Delineation for the Regional Bike Path Connector would be achieved primarily through signage and ideally incorporated into signage for nearby bikeway elements. On-road striping may also be appropriate, particularly regarding the Ten Mile River Bike Path Connector.

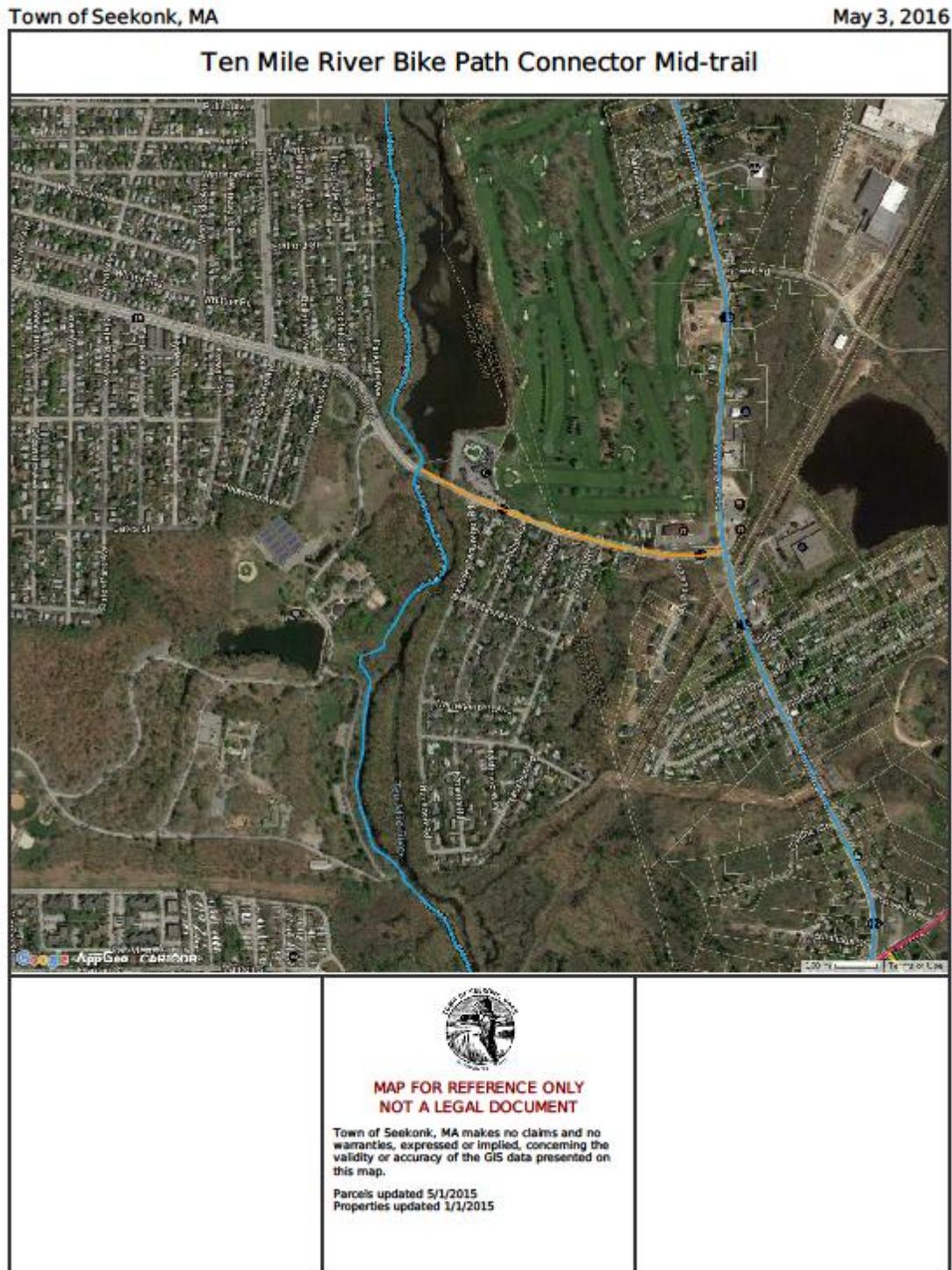
The Seekonk Bikeway

Figure 8a. Ten Mile River Bike Path Connector North



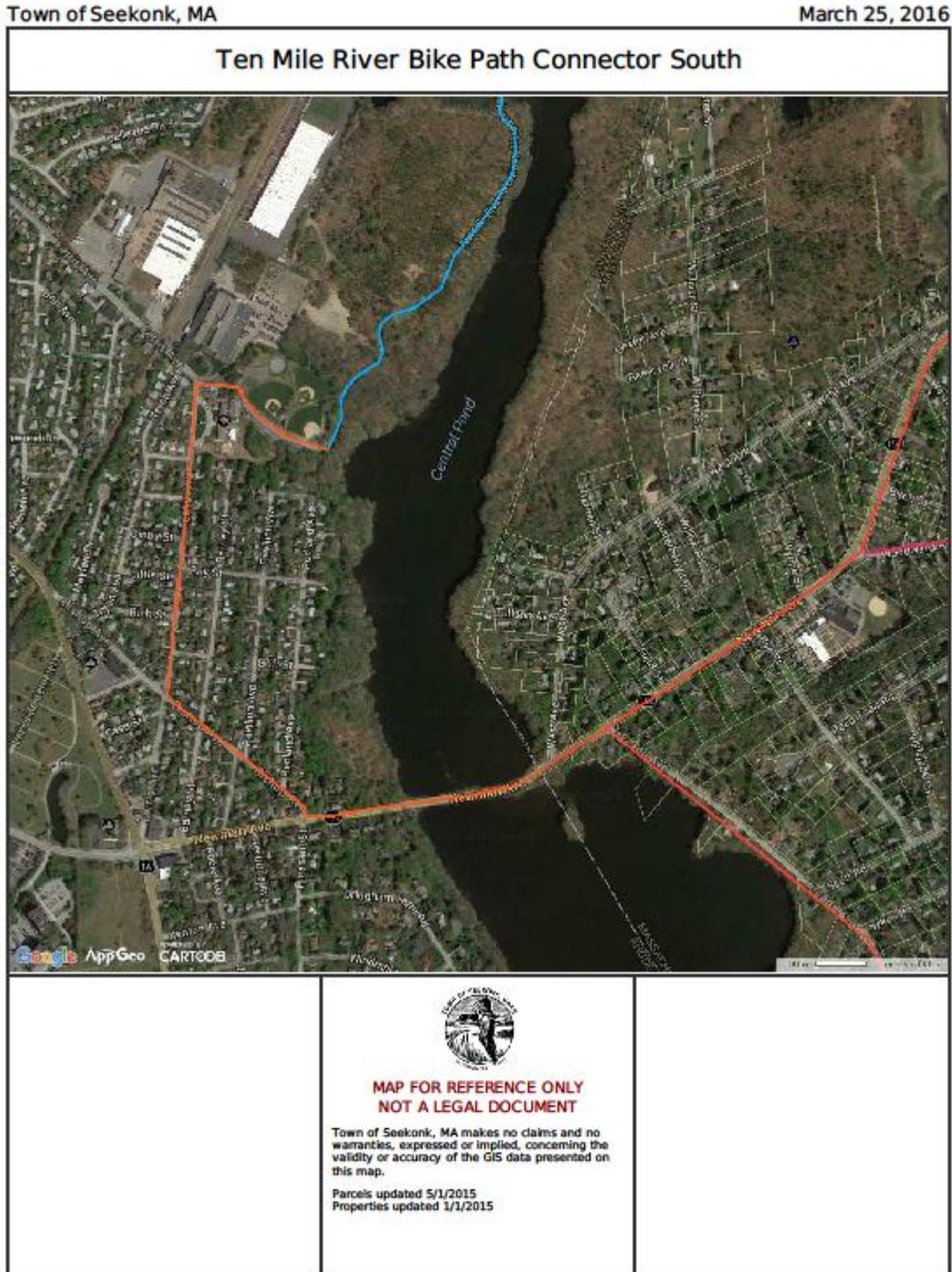
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Figure 8b. Ten Mile River Bike Path Connector



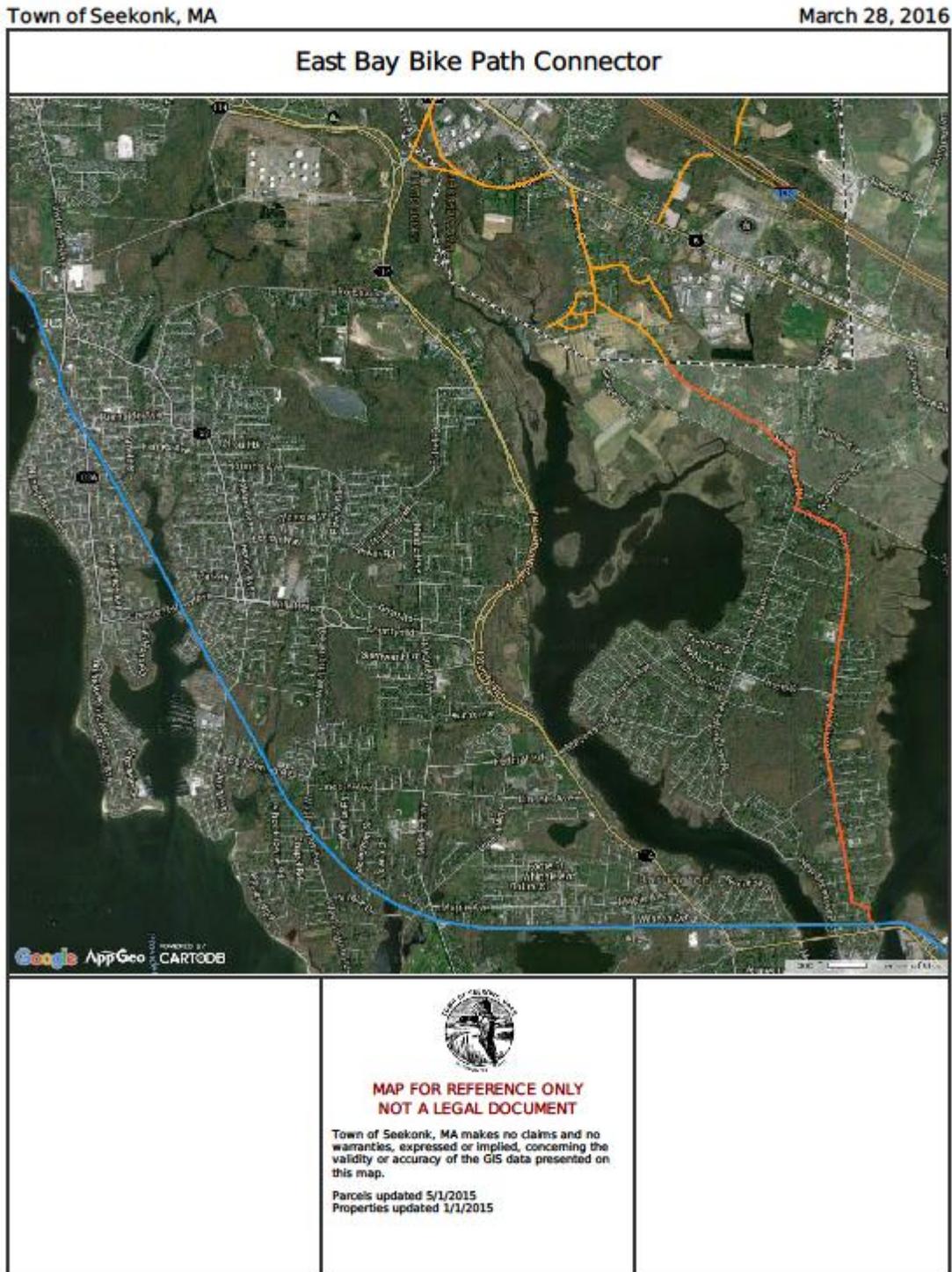
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Figure 8c. Ten Mile River Bike Path Connector South



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Figure 9. East Bay Bike Path Connector



The Seekonk Bikeway

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities for additional elements to be added to the Seekonk Bikeway include three categories; expansion of existing bikeway elements; Bike path development; and off-road bikeway elements. These additional opportunities would either expand on already established bikeway elements or introduce new elements which enhance the bikeway. Any such expansions should be reviewed and if appropriate adopted into the master plan for the bikeway.

All of the bikeway elements described previously could be expanded as future needs and opportunities in the Town arise. For example, additional neighborhood loops could be added as the Town grows or additional area loops or connectors may be identified. Also, newly developed elements may provide new opportunities to add to a bikeway element as discussed below.

Bike path development would consist of the construction of dedicated paved paths on public land or easements allowing for public use. An example of one such opportunity is the rail line which runs from southwest to northeast in the northern section of town. A portion of the rail line right of way could house a shared use path and portions of such a path could be incorporated into a new area loop utilizing the rail line right-of-way, Brook Street and the 10 Mile River Bike Path. The draft SMMPO Regional Bicycle Plan identifies this rail right-of-way for potential development as a Class I bikeway and further serious consideration and study should be considered.

A final potential opportunity would be the designation, development, and incorporation of off road bike trails into the bikeway system. The off-road trails could utilize existing public land or be located elsewhere assuming public access and use was appropriately secured. These trails could incorporate existing trails (assuming no use restrictions prohibit biking) or allow a vehicle for the development of new trails. These elements would expand the potential users of the bikeway by providing for both on-road and off-road cycling opportunities to Seekonk's residents and guests.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the **Seekonk Bikeway** will consist of several phases:

1. Initial Formal Authorization
2. Conceptual Design and Outreach
3. Final Formal Authorization
4. Design
5. Construction
6. Dedication/ Opening
7. Expansion

A summary of each phase identifying the key Seekonk public body, town staff, other municipality, and/or state, regional, or federal agencies that are anticipated to be involved is provided below.

The Seekonk Bikeway

Initial Formal Authorization

This stage involves the authorization by the appropriate Town public bodies of the conceptual design of a bikeway program for the Town of Seekonk. Review of this proposal by the Planning Board and Town staff is the first element of this stage. The proposal has been distributed to all Town Department for their initial comments and concerns. The proposal was before the Planning Board for discussion on September 8, 2015. The Board granted initial authorization to pursue the proposal and the process has now proceeded to the Conceptual Design and Outreach stage. Costs for this stage were limited as reviews were generally conducted by town staff and the proposal was prepared by the Town Planner.

Conceptual Design and Outreach

The proposal is currently in the first part of this stage. The Town Planner will continue to work with the Planning Board and Town departments to identify concerns and synthesize comments generated during the first stage into the proposal. A key aspect in this stage will be the development of a realistic estimate of the costs of implementation of the bikeway. Once the Planning Board is satisfied with the proposal an outreach process can be initiated to introduce the proposal to other town bodies, the public, other municipalities, state agencies, and regional entities.

It is anticipated that comment will be sought from the Board of Selectman, Conservation Commission, and Parks and Recreation Committee. The proposal will also be forwarded to the affected adjoining communities, appropriate state agencies and regional entities. The Town Planner will also convene a number of public meetings to solicit comments on the proposal in preparation the formal authorization of the project. Costs for this stage will be limited.

As part of the initial outreach stage, a meeting was convened with SRPEDD staff in October 2015 to discuss the potential inclusion of the plan in the SMMPO Regional Bike Plan. The Town is considering formally requesting the current draft of the Seekonk Bikeway Plan (November 2015) be included in the draft SMMPO plan which is currently in the public comment phase of its consideration.

Design

After the review and comment period described above is completed and the proposal accordingly amended where necessary, development of final design documents by the appropriate professionals represents the next implementation stage.

This stage involves the final design of the bikeway by an appropriate engineering firm in preparation for installation and construction. This will include preparation of required construction documents for the various bikeway elements as well as a final project budget detailing the costs of the construction. This phase will require close coordination with Seekonk Department of Public Works and Massachusetts Department of Transportation. Costs for this stage will comprise the costs related to development of the design by an appropriate consulting engineering firm. Grant funding for these costs should be pursued.

The Seekonk Bikeway

Final Formal Authorization

Once the construction documents are prepared the next step will be identifying and formal approval of applications for implementation funds. It is anticipated that a number of different funding sources will be sought for the various elements of the bikeway. Opportunities to jointly seek funding sources with other public entities will be pursued at this stage as well. Thus, barring the ability to identify and pursue a single funding source for the entire bikeway program; this “formal authorization” may occur a number of times and in a number of venues as various grant applications are prepared and submitted for authorization for the elements of the bikeway before various authorizing public entities. Costs for this stage will be limited as the proposal and construction documents will have been prepared and will form the basis of any such application. It should be noted, however, that matching funds will most likely need to be identified during this stage as a part of the grant applications seeking funds to implement the bikeway.

Construction

During this stage the physical components of the bikeway elements are installed including signage, pavement striping, stenciling and the introduction of and modification to any traffic control called for in the final design.

Dedication/ Opening

This stage represents the formal opening of the bikeway. As the Town may choose to pursue the program in a phased manner by constructing individual elements of the system a number of opening/dedication ceremonies may occur as the program moves toward full implementation.

Expansion/ Enhancement

This stage represents future efforts to expand or otherwise enhance the bikeway. Such projects may involve some the suggestions identified in the **Additional Opportunities** section of this proposal or others yet to be identified opportunities. Any project would be subject to formal review and approval. The costs of such expansion would vary based on the nature of the proposal.