

## Update #7 from the Chappy Path Committee

March 1, 2010

**Northeastern Student Presentation.** On February 26, 2010 from 11:00 am to about 12:30 pm, five Northeastern civil engineering students,<sup>1</sup> members of Husky Transportation Engineering, presented their preliminary findings on the need and design of a Chappy multi-use path, as well as design possibilities for the Ferry parking lot and lines and the Dike Bridge Road intersection. The meeting was held in the Edgartown Town Hall and moderated by Stuart Fuller, Head of the Highway Department of Edgartown. In attendance were about 40 members of the community (for, against and undecided), mostly from Chappy, as well as the press. The Selectmen were notified of the project in December and expressed support for going ahead with the study, which is at no cost to the Town.

Mr. Fuller noted at the beginning that the goal of the meeting was to discuss the design and engineering aspects, not the political issues. The overall approach taken by students was to evaluate the road for present and future use as a sustainable network for motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, from a perspective of safety, efficiency and comfort of all users, to determine what, if any, action should be taken. The students had a free rein to evaluate the situation and they were not constrained or directed by previous opinions.

Daniel Dulaski, PhD, PE, the Transportation Engineering professor of the Civil Engineering department at Northeastern introduced the "Capstone Project", a

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Blaser, Project Manager, Michael Pritula, Traffic Engineer, Henry Nsang, Project Engineer, Heather Georgalla, Field Engineer, Danial Curley, Highway Engineer. Email address: [HTE-Capstone@googlegroups.com](mailto:HTE-Capstone@googlegroups.com).

practical, real-life design exercise that is a required for graduation. He confirmed that this effort is independent of any Chappaquiddick interest group and seeks to provide a fresh and expert analysis of the issues, and turned the floor over to the students.

The five senior civil engineering students spent about 30 minutes presenting their findings, followed by a lively and civil question and answer period and ending with a gathering around a mural sized draft diagram of their proposal. They described their considerable work and educational experience in civil engineering and then went through a slide show presentation<sup>2</sup> that included the published safety issues of sharing the road with vehicles and the desirability of a sustainable transportation design. Their resources included the prior land surveys of Chappaquiddick and Dike Bridge Roads), the Chappybikepath.com web site, data on traffic on Chappy, published studies on bike paths, regulations concerning bike path construction and a two day site visit to Chappy in late January.

The students had checked the accident rate on Chappy, which to date fortunately does not include any fatalities, but noted that past history is not necessarily predictive of the future, and proactive measures can be taken to make accidents less likely. They reviewed the existing Chappaquiddick Road (20 feet wide in a 50 foot right of way) and the difficulty of sharing this road with bicycles and pedestrians.

**They compared four alternatives** and rated the benefits of each option: 1) do nothing, 2) add arrows on the side of the road with bicycle logos ("sharrows"), 3)

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<sup>2</sup> The slide presentation is expected to be available soon to the public on a web site to be announced.

widening the road 4 feet on either side for bicycle lanes and 4) a separate multi-use path 8 feet wide and separated by a minimum of 5 feet from the road. In the Q&A period other possibilities were raised by the audience, such as speed bumps (which can be removable), a full time policeman, and a one way loop around the island. The merits and limitations of each of these possibilities were addressed thoughtfully by the students and Prof. Dulaski.

**The recommended solution** by the engineering students was to create an 8 foot shared use path separated from the road by 5 feet (with natural vegetation screening and trees where possible). They concluded that the north side of the paved road from the Ferry to the Dike Bridge is better than the south side, since wetlands were less of an issue on that side. Dike Bridge Road would remain a dirt road. In response to questions they said that there is room in the town right of way for this over the entire course, without encroaching on any private land, although the existing roadway may need to be shifted in places to the south over approximately 1500 feet of its length. Several issues will be addressed in the future such as the optimal surface, alternative solutions to problem areas, and costs. Throughout their discussion the students showed respect for the “rural jewel” view of Chappy and the diversity of opinions on the matter of a path.

**One of the benefits** was a new design idea for the Chappy ferry parking and waiting line area. They showed how the waiting line could be moved to the north side of the road, allowing the parking to be in the center and the exit lane from the ferry moved to the present ferry line area, all accomplished without the loss of any parking spaces. Many in the audience voiced support of this approach, including ferry management.

**The Dike Bridge Road intersection** was also considered. The students noted that

there is an extra 2000 sq. ft. of unnecessary pavement there, and proposed two possible alternatives: a small roundabout (with grass planting or other pervious surface) and separated lanes with stop signs. In each case more vegetation and less pavement would result as well as a safer traffic flow due to the traffic calming effect.

The ferry parking area and Dike bridge intersection designs can be implemented independent of a multi-use path.

In the course of the meeting several members of the audience, as well as the moderator, expressed their thanks to the students for an excellent, thoughtful and constructive presentation in which we all were educated.

**The next steps** are for the students to get further opinions from the community by a mailed survey, and refine the design based on input from this first meeting and the mail survey. A future meeting in a few weeks will be announced to go over the more complete versions and details. An opportunity to present the findings to the Edgartown Planning Board will be sought (this initial meeting was not under their auspices, as we had originally thought). We will also seek opportunities in the summer for representatives from the project to present their findings to the seasonal residents.

**This project is supported by charitable donations** from 20 Chappy families at no direct cost to the Town. The Chappy Path Committee has helped enable the project, but the project is independent of any group, and reports to the Edgartown Department of Transportation.

Respectfully submitted,  
Chappy Path Steering Committee

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