



# Potential for bike lanes?

## **Marblehead, Massachusetts**

**Prepared for: Marblehead Board of Selectmen**

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# Should Marblehead do something to encourage more bike use?

- **Absolutely**, Marblehead should encourage **both bike and pedestrian circulation enhancements**.
- **But, take a broad view**. 'Bike lanes' don't fit everywhere and are not a 'one size fits all' solution.
- **A good off street system is best**. The 7-mile Marblehead rail trail system, normally the safest way for cyclists and walkers, in-line skaters, etc. to use is in deplorable condition. Fixing these rail trails should be an emergency priority. Making such enhancements increases the value of the Town and its real estate/businesses. Many communities realize this and are moving forward with multiuse path enhancements for the rail trail components of their bike circulation system.
- **On-street bike enhancements can be made, but need to be done carefully with pertinent facts in hand**.
  - ▣ What roads are appropriate for bike lanes and what bike users are appropriate for them.
  - ▣ What supplemental signage is needed for bike lanes.
  - ▣ What the year round impacts are on other street users and the environment.
  - ▣ What the system's continuity will be to take users where they want to go.
  - ▣ Installation and maintenance costs.

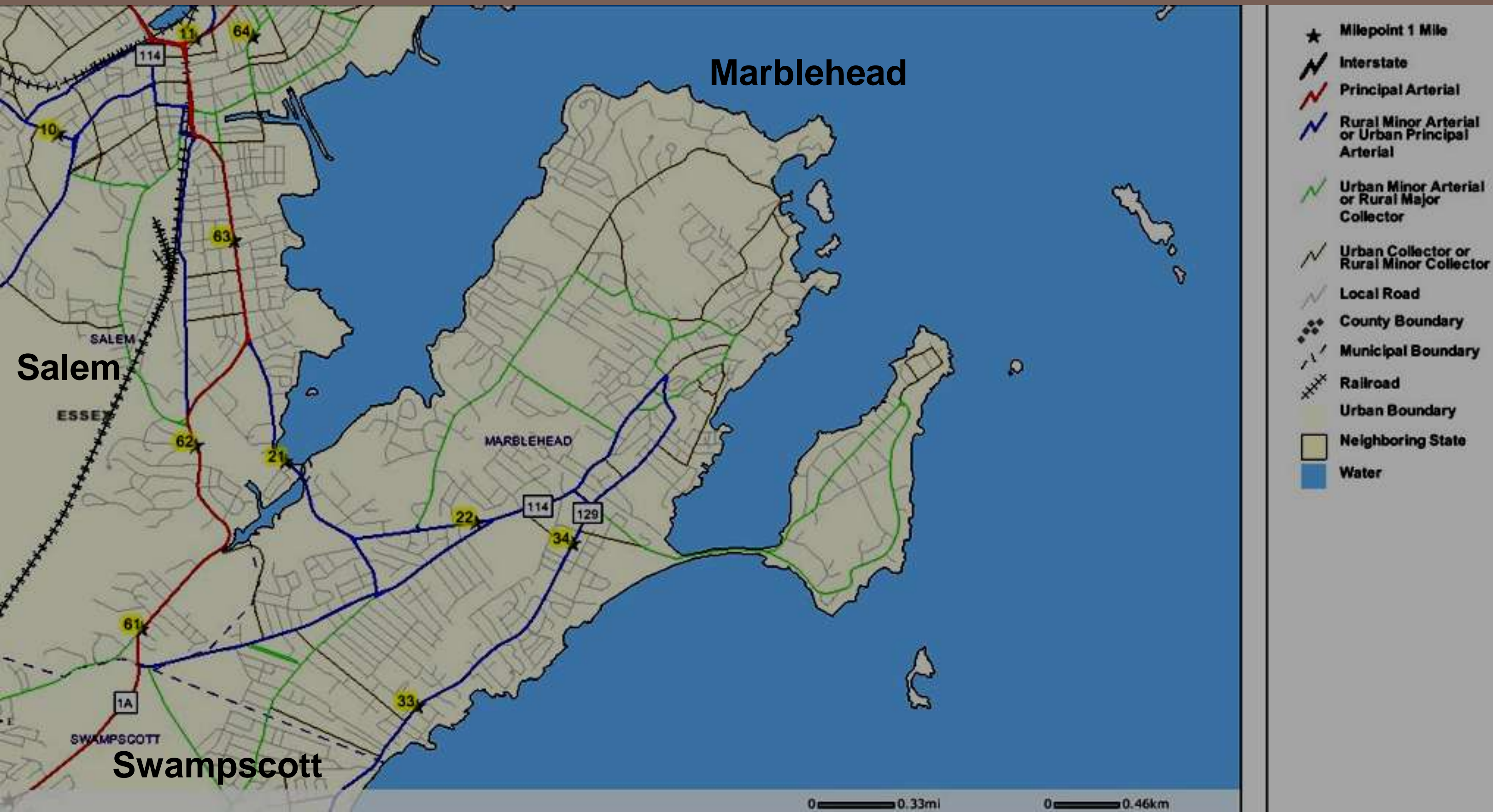
# Think ‘multimodal’

- Remember, **bikes are already allowed on every street in Marblehead and are only one of several environmentally friendly modes.**
- Evaluate potential **bike circulation environment changes within the context of impacts on all modes**, including vehicles and pedestrians & environmental impacts (e.g., more signs on limited sidewalk space, still many ADA sidewalk upgrades are needed townwide).
- **Focus on:**
  - ▣ System connectivity
  - ▣ The three options for bikes:
    - Class I, exclusive multi-use ways – **rail trails benefit all non-motorized users**
    - Class II, bike lanes – **anticipate very limited applicability**
    - Class III, shared roads – **most applicable in Marblehead**
  - Which Marblehead generators need better bike and pedestrian access
  - User levels – beginners and experienced
  - Compatible policies for bike storage and bike safety training
- Always consider **year round and maintenance impacts!**



# Marblehead Functional Classifications

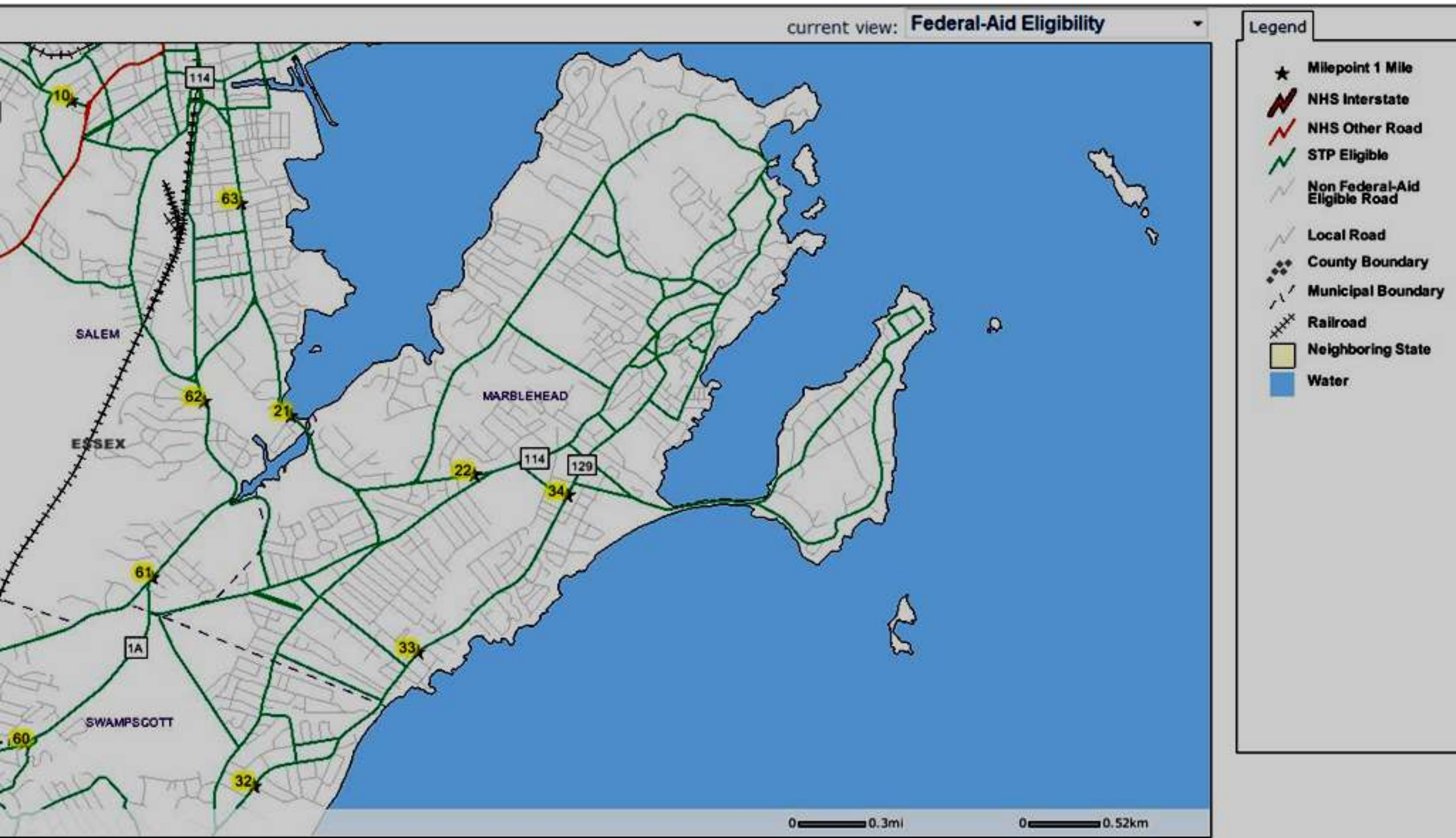
Source: MassDOT





# Marblehead Federal Aid Funding Eligibility

## Source: MassDOT





# Marblehead Off-road Multiuse Paths

Source: MassDOT



# How much would it cost to do Pleasant St or Town-wide 'Bike Circulation' plan?

- **Recommendation:** Pleasant Street is too narrow of a planning focus, should look at Townwide implications & set priorities before jumping into painting bike lanes on the roads
- **Bike lane and bike shared lane markings ('sharrows') applicability plan components:**
  - Work with Town to establish framework with public input
  - Review available Town Surveyor curb-to-curb plans and GIS to assess applicability of collectors and arterials for bike lanes and off-road multiuse paths.
  - Photo inventory of system; actual field width measurements at critical locations.
  - Address on-street parking as well as bike/ped crossing issues for multi-use paths
  - Pro/con assessment of potential bike lane/shared lane markings by location.
  - Create Townwide map highlighting potential locations for bike path upgrades/bike lanes/sharrows
  - Estimate annual implementation and maintenance costs for program.
- **Estimated cost:** Approximately \$25K-30K Townwide Plan.
- **Drawbacks:**
  - Doesn't address town-wide multiuse path/sidewalk upgrades
  - Doesn't include scaled bid plans for implementation of bike lanes and supplemental signage



# Important questions that must be resolved before installing bike lanes

- Where do bike lanes fit in with Marblehead's circulation environment priorities? A few words of caution: the devil is in the details!
- What about Marblehead's many street and street segments not wide enough to support bike lanes?
- What about its multi-use path system?
- Who are the 'winners' and 'losers' with the implementation of bike lanes?
- Can 'bike lanes' peacefully co-exist with *other modes that need street space and attention*; i.e., sidewalks/ADA compliance/vehicle users (including buses and trucks) with tighter lanes?
- What are implementation costs & where will necessary signs and markings go? How much will annual maintenance costs be?
- What happens in 'tight' spots – i.e., need expect *many* discontinuities in a Marblehead bike lane system due to parking and occasional auxiliary traffic lanes?



# Let's get priorities straight

- **Premise:**

- **Painting** bike lanes would be a cheap way to make Marblehead a 'safer' community

- **My opinion:**

- **Cheap is not always best. Taking away 10 feet of space *year-round* -- five feet on each side of the road -- affects all roadway users , and not always beneficially.** including autos, trucks, buses, and even pedestrians. Just look at how enormous snow banks affected road widths, sight lines, and motor vehicle travel this winter. Bike lanes would remove road space year round, even in winters when bike usage is very low to non-existent.
  - **Should bike lanes be a priority over Marblehead's pedestrian/sidewalk environment that has far greater use?** As a professional, I would *never* propose creating *overly narrow travel lanes to accommodate bike lanes*. Streets with overly narrow lanes that carry trucks and increase potential for head on collisions, while presenting greater difficulties to senior drivers are not safe. There are some, but not a lot of streets that are good candidates for exclusive bike lanes in Marblehead. There are times (when pedestrians are not crossing) when from a fuel consumption perspective it is a good thing to be able to slowly go the right or left of a vehicle waiting to turn left. Bike lanes would clearly restrict such movements, which are most impactful during peak hours.



Questions?