

The Greenway Through Massachusetts

8/26/21 Eliot, ME to Danvers, MA ...



I pushed myself, there was no doubt about that. Part of the problem was waiting to eat Breakfast at the Friendly Toast. Still a hallmark eatery but ordering a cheese omelet without cheese was somehow disappointing. A late opening (at least to me) compounded the problem. Then onward. A very hot day but extra water and smoothies along the waterfront helped to ease the heat. Massachusetts came up without warning and before I knew it, Newburyport came and went. The next high-light was a trail stretching for something like eight miles. When I reached Danvers, I started looking for

the motel 6 that would house me for the night. It was not where I expected it to be. It was, in fact, a few miles farther. I then decided to use DATA (going online using the cell phone) as a last resort. Turn it on. Get the Route. Turn it off. This had become my habit now as signage became more scarce. Motel 6, a poor excuse for a motel and not worth the money spent on it. As I write, this, a few days later, I hope I didn't pick something up there. A hard place cycling to as well.

8/27/21 Danvers / Peabody to Lynn ...



A nice, lazy ride of 30 miles that I nevertheless took a full day to traverse. Many times I would walk if the turns were close together or the traffic seemed too close. Much time was spent relaxing at the Salem Willows, enjoying the cool ocean breezes. Arriving in Lynn found me struggling to navigate a city I was unfamiliar with, forgetting the easiest way to my hosts. Yet, in the end, it was done. My Lynn hosts were most engaging, lived in a big stone house with many outside beds of veggies and flowers and a most permacultural look to them. I was invited to spend an extra night

and the extra day allowed for more logistical research and sight-seeing. It was dry the first night and rainy the second – no dry tent for me.



8/29/21 Lynn to Needham ...

It was a Sunday, therefore, minimal traffic in the early morning hours as I departed Lynn. This made the trip from Lynn much faster than the trip to Lynn, two days earlier, with a more direct route. My observations suggest that Massachusetts drivers are more aggressive, in general, than in Maine. Perhaps, not aggressive, but hurried by the culture of always catching up. In any case, once on the Greenway, my path was laid, and I “hurried” along, anxious to put Boston behind me. Nevertheless, I was forced to a walking pace due to a gap in

signage. Navigating required more use of DATA for tracking the Greenway and this became more habit-forming.

Boston left my head spinning with splits and loops to dazzle the linear mind. The oddest experience was walking through a resort called **Encore**. Truly out of sync with its surroundings, it comprised a large hotel building with elegant and lush landscaping and not a piece of litter in site.

Eventually I merged with the Charles River Greenway, a pleasant ride but with inadequate purveyors of comestibles located within eye-shot of the trail. The trail would have been more pleasant if I hadn't been on the lookout for my exit to Needham, located to the south of the Greenway and far from the route. That came up after miles of riding and one conversation with an interested local cyclist.

I finally turned south and with riding and walking, found my way to my hosts in Needham – about six miles from the Greenway – a permacultural and sustainably-minded household. And here I am, with an extra day to non-pedal and take care of needs not met by cycling. (8/30/21 – Laundry, shopping, logistics, etc...)

8/31/21 Needham to Worcester ...



On the road again. A long ride back to the Greenway with another rear flat saw the ride off to a really good start (hear the sarcasm?). That's when I started to think about accommodations and where they are to be found. On route is best and my brain started to work on the best design for a cyclists motel. After a brief ride along the Charles River Greenway it was back to the road. Up hill and down it led, through small towns and rural countryside with narrow to nil shoulders and plenty of traffic to make it less than enjoyable on this part. Still, persistence pays and I finally found myself in Worcester. A harrowing bike ride along a lake, and some turns, and I was at my next overnight, a warm showers host with generous dinner and breakfast and the necessary technology for continued logistical support. It had become the norm that I would,

every night, research the route ahead and accommodations to match. This has been the most common occurrence other than pedaling and one I would gladly cede to others. Motorists, I have noticed, work to avoid accidents with cyclists but some of them cut it rather close, especially at rush hour.

9/1/21 Worcester, MA to Providence, RI ...

Proceeding on to Providence and Rhode Island, I have entered my fourth state. This day saw enjoyment in riding the Blackstone River Bikeway, stretching from Woonsocket, RI to Pawtucket, RI, a distance of almost 14 miles. Along the way, rains descended and it became my goal to finish this bike path. I had been offered a way out with a car ride for myself, my bike, and my gear. It became evident to me that movement along the bike path became possible and safer than movement along a road under those conditions. So, I accepted the car ride only at the end of that bikeway. Meanwhile, the rain continued. I persisted. Overpasses became a blessing, a haven in the storm. Ironically, the rain diminished, and dropped to near nothing by the time my riding was done. An extra day in Providence gave me the opportunity to dry off and shop for Video Mounts. Two days later, I was off again.