

# Menemsha Traffic, Parking & Pedestrian Access

## VISIONING SESSION

Tuesday January 12, 2016 at 6:30 PM

Facilitator: Bill Veno, Senior Planner MV Commission

The Selectmen are seeking public comments and input from all stakeholders on the traffic flow, parking areas, and pedestrian access. We want to document your ideas and include them in the town's planning process.

*Approved at STM on November 9, 2015.*

**Article 4.** To see if the Town will vote to appropriate from available funds in the treasury the sum of **\$10,000.00** to develop a traffic and parking plan for vehicles and pedestrians in Menemsha, including costs incidental and relative thereto.

**Recommended by the Finance Advisory Committee – six Ayes, no nays, one not present**

Menemsha is crowded during the summer, most especially during the hours leading up to sunset. To address this, the town hired two traffic officers and a police officer for Menemsha during the busy afternoons into evening. The town also posted extensive parking and tow zone regulations. Recently the Town Meeting funded a sunset bus that shuttles people from the Tabor House Road parking lot to Menemsha every day and evening in July and August. This year the shuttle helped remove between 20 and 75 cars each sunny evening from Menemsha. It is also beginning to be used during the day by people seeking easier parking for the harbor.

Anonymous donors have offered to help pay for the engineering and installation of a side walk around the corner from Crick Hill Road to the Beetlebung Coffee House. This should be evaluated within the context of a plan for the Menemsha area and not as a stand-alone concept.

It is time for a comprehensive plan to address traffic, parking, buses, and pedestrian access to Menemsha. This is both a public convenience and public safety matter.

The goals for tonight are to discuss various ideas to improve public safety for pedestrians and traffic in Menemsha. The Selectmen have been looking in to ways to improve the summer situation. These are some of the initiatives being looked at. **YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO MAKE YOUR OWN SUGGESTIONS** tonight too.

### **BEACH to BRIDGE**

Last year the Selectmen purchased and had installed 375 feet of wooden boardwalk from the Beach to near the Comfort Station. (The **light pink line** on the map.) This was to remove as many pedestrians walking to and from the beach from Basin Road as possible. It has had some success and the Selectmen are considering extending the board walk (The **bright pink line** on the map.) to the Comfort Station.

The Selectmen have applied for an Order of Conditions from the Conservation Commission to build a new “shell” parking area to the North of the Comfort Station and move all the commercial fishermen and fish market employee parking from the old “Shell” lot. (Red boxes on map.) The existing “shell” lot is being freed up for use as a turn-around for the VTA buses, Sunset Bus and possibly a place to make the tour vans tour around. This would move the bus stop from in front of the Menemsha Fish House and prevent the buses from having to travel around the beach part of the parking lot where pedestrians and strollers mix with cars seeking parking. That location was not working because of the active business traffic, the number of people waiting for the bus at times, and the fact that during evenings people would flag the bus down before it got there and it would already be full.

### **BRIDGE to NORTH ROAD**

A group of concerned citizens has offered to pay for a sidewalk around the curve between the Beetlebung Café and Crick Hill. (Yellow curve on map.) and connecting it to a pedestrian path that would run down Basin Road to North Road. This corner is always a safety concern in the summer. If the town were to acquire space on that corner, we could build a road side path on either side.

The Selectmen, members of the Harbor Advisory Committee and other stakeholders participated in the annual fall walk around Menemsha. They reviewed and discussed tying a pedestrian path alongside Basin Road to the potential sidewalk on the Crick Hill Corner. (The red and orange lines on the map.) It was discussed which side of the road might work best from one end of Basin Road to the other. It was agreed to hire an engineer to survey and map the exiting conditions.

### **NORTH ROAD to BOATHOUSE ROAD**

The pedestrian traffic and parking on North Road creates essentially one travel lane from Greenabuum’s driveway to the Menemsha Market. The parking and pedestrians between the Market and Galley make it less than a one lane passageway when customers are lined up.

The continuation of a pedestrian path from the Beach could travel down the South side of the North Road. (The yellow line on the map.) This could be painted on the pavement from Eddy’s Island Way to past the Homeport parking lot.

A turn-around at the end of North Road was discussed by the group at the Walk Around. (The green circle on the map.) This could require the relocation of the handicap parking space and the Galley pilings, and the loss of 2 angle parking spaces.

The parallel parking along the North side of the North Road (the blue line on the map) might be able to be changed to angle parking or be moved further over on town land to accommodate pedestrians or a full traveled way for cars and trucks.

### **VTA Bus & Sunset Bus**

The Selectmen received a number of suggestions for improving the public convenience and safety. One from the Police Department follows:

Tim, I've spoken with most of the summer/parking guys and they agree that the spot in front of the public restrooms is a more desirable place to pick up and drop off. Specifically after sunset it would be nice to have one location to tell people to go to for pick up so there is some order to who gets on the bus first. There are other benefits as well including:

- 1-This is basically the first open spot on the loop where people congregate to get the bus so it makes it fair to tell everyone to go there.
- 2-The bus drivers and police officers can direct people to use the new dune boardwalk to go to and from the restroom pick up and the beach minimizing pedestrians in the driving lanes of the parking lot.
- 3-When the bus pulls in the open space in front of the restrooms it opens up more room for two way traffic so it doesn't come to a stand still. The current spot in front of the Fish Shack is too crowded and the bus shuts down a whole lane of traffic.
- 4-People can use the restrooms while still waiting in that spot for the bus to pick up, it's well lit and safer.

Tim, not sure if you can put a bus stop sign there but at least tell the VTA of our plan. Our officers have been directing people to the rest rooms for after sunset pick up already to avoid the people getting upset that they were told to wait in a spot that will take longer for them to get back to dump lot.

Thanks,

1. The Menemsha Drop and pick up spot moved to in front of the comfort station. (near beginning of boardwalk)
2. (if Possible) on busy nights the trip turn around time was approx. 25 min. Perhaps 2 buses beginning 1.5 hr before sunset until 1.5 hr after. People all tend to leave shortly after sunset and some unhappy goers had to wait for 3 trips. The second bus would cut the turn around time in 1/2 and also alleviate some of the long wait after sunset.

From business people:

My observations for what they are worth are that the VTA buses are the saving grace of Menemsha (and there is little else!). ...they don't clog up the area by the bathing beach per se -- it is the folks who are stopped to allow folks to get in and out of their vehicles while the driver continues to circle or is waiting for a driver to back out so they can slip in. Or the really clever ones who circle the parking lot with a designated driver who then changes over to someone who has just come up off the beach to take over while designated driver goes swimming.

The Town's installation of the wooden boardwalk was some success but still a lot of people in the road. The big trucks (I know that this is a touchy subject) by the Fish House are, well, big. And sometimes there are two or three of them parked there, some with their engines or compressors/coolers running. Can't they plug in to keep the cargo cold? It would be quieter and more environmentally friendly. How about having the traffic police actively (and I mean active -- not checking their phones or oogling the bikinis) encourage folks to park at the Landfill site. Now the folks who used to park by the beach are parking in the Basin Road parking area by Beetlebung Cafe, Lambert's Cove Glass, Scott's shop and the Chandlery. The merchants there (ask Annette) are constantly chasing folks.

Let's face it, there are too many cars and too many people. Everything is crowded and crowd control is difficult. I'm surprised that someone hasn't run over kids/dogs/pedestrians by The Bite, or run off the road into Jimmy and Roberta's shop.

Presumably when beach passes are sold, those folks using Menemsha are instructed (and being nice to them isn't working) to park at the Landfill. The Inns should be told to make their people park at the Landfill. Make sure that they know that it is free. Make sure that the signs are big enough to read without driving off the road. Maybe no cars, only VTA buses, down past the fish markets unless they are getting gas. That will cause a jam up by the comfort station. Maybe another smaller comfort station by Menemsha Blues or somewhere before folks get to the harbor. Maybe we need the new comfort station more than some other things around Town.

As I'm unable to attend the Menemsha Traffic/Parking Vision Meeting, I'd like to submit the following thoughts via e-mail:

1. I'd like to see the three? 30 minute parking spaces presently located just past the bridge over the creek shifted to a location more between Larsens Fish Market and the Menemsha Fish Market.
2. Often during the crowded periods, cars will park in front of the Menemsha Fish House, Larsens Fish Market, and Donald Poole's lot. While the cars may be legally parked inside the white line on the side of the road, they can present problems when "left for hours to go to the beach or fishing". I would suggest limiting parking in this area to 30 minutes unless loading/unloading.
3. During 2015, tour bus/ cab operators began using small bus-like vehicles for tours in Menemsha. Due to the length of these buses, they project into the travel lane when parked in a legal parking space. Alternatively they frequently parallel park in the "no parking" area in front of the restrooms or attempt to park on Donald Poole's lot. The size of these vehicles prohibits them from legally parking. The operators need to be restricted in the overall length of the vehicle in Menemsha, a van or extended van that was previously used is OK.

4. The longstanding problem with drivers and tour vans driving out on the Westside Drive On Dock continues. It would be fair to estimate that half the vehicles driving to and from the dock are not boat owners, guests, or have no reason to be transiting the area other than "sightseeing". This unnecessary traffic creates meeting situations resulting in drivers having to back up sometimes hundreds of feet, traffic

jams, and close passing situations. A police presence limiting access to the dock to only legitimate users would seem to be helpful in alleviating this problem during the summer months. Eventually drivers will stop using this route for sightseeing if they're turned around by an Officer.

I feel all went well considering the circumstances. Closer monitoring of who parks in Menemsha might help. Some park, take the bike ferry and bike to Aquinnah beaches using up a whole day of a parking spot. Some sort of parking for local employees could help, maybe at the school, town hall or community center. The vta buses come through about every 15 minutes, is there a place to turn them around? Double parking could be established along the east side of Basin Road and some consideration should be given to the rising sea levels. Signs along entry routes could warn people menemsha parking is full and to use the free shuttle parking. Keep up the good work!

From a Resident:

Dear Sirs,

First in regards to the change of VTA to change the bus parking to south of the restroom, is ridiculous. Keep the same route with smaller busses, less pollution and congestion. Not that many passengers anyway.

Second I hope that if you decide to build a new restroom you keep it small. If you build it bigger they will come.

Third have you considered the old school playground for a new fire station, just a thought.

The Tabor House Road parking lot was much better utilized by visitors in 2016. It has been suggested that we have two shuttles in the evening and perhaps close traffic off on Basin Road once it reaches a saturation point. What are your thoughts?

Thank you for coming to this meeting. Your comments are being documented and will be part of the plan and process going forward.

