Bike to the Sea comes roaring into its 25th year with excitement about the progress that has been made in bicyclist and pedestrian accommodations in the Northern Strand communities. We also have solid plans and a great deal of optimism for the positive changes in the years to come.

With the 7½ miles of continuous trail now open through Everett, Malden, Revere and Saugus, steady progress has been made with the city of Lynn in developing its final section. In September 2016, the first annual Community Day Bash opened the first path section in Lynn with an unveiling of a large mural, designed and painted by teens at Raw Art Works. Also within the last year, the Baker-Polito Administration through the Department of Conservation and Recreation once again awarded B2C a $50,000 Recreational Trails grant, this time earmarked for further improvements to the Saugus segment of the trail. The NSCT was also one of only a handful of projects to be awarded funding from the Solomon Foundation – champions of Greater Boston's parks and greenways.

Everett
Development of the Wynn Resorts Casino has taken a step forward and is bringing trail improvements along with it. A $150,000 grant awarded by the Massachusetts Gaming Commission will study the potential extension of the trail to the Mystic River, and Wynn has committed $250,000 toward getting a proposed bike/ped bridge over the Mystic River to 25% design completion. The paved trail also continues to catalyze development, with the arrivals of Bone-Up Brewery and Short Path Distillery, joining Night Shift Brewing in the burgeoning “fermentation district.” A new ADA-accessible ramp was also constructed at the end of Norman Street providing direct access to these fine establishments from the trail. Stop by and sample some locally-sourced libations at the end of your next ride.

Malden
The city continues to leverage the path as a key asset in unlocking further development, and with trailside real estate development booming, Malden also has a renewed focus on open space. The
Community Preservation Act has been passed, unlocking potential future funding. B2C has partnered with various advocacy groups, including the Friends of the Malden River, the Mystic River Watershed Association and the Solomon Foundation, helping to solidify future greenway planning along the Malden River. The Malden Community Garden has expanded its footprint to nearly double its former size. Last but not least, Mayor Gary Christenson formally established the city’s Complete Streets Task Force, potentially providing up to $400,000 of MassDOT funding for upgrades to bicycle, pedestrian and transit improvements including potential upgrades to the trail. B2C Project Manager Clay Larsen was one of the first appointments to the task force, bringing his expertise in planning and design to make for a safer, better-connected Malden.

Revere
Now that the Revere section has been built with an initial recycled asphalt surface, B2C continues to gather funding to work toward the goal of a smoothly paved path. Additional work done has included updates to trail entrance gateways, trail shoulder improvements and tree work, installation of signage and park benches and training and utilization of community youth corps and volunteers for trail clean-up events, maintenance and plantings.

We’ve secured the installation of a pedestrian-activated rectangular rapid-flash beacon where the trail crosses Salem Street and added entry gates to prevent any motorized vehicle access. New benches, wildflower meadow installation, and erosion control are all helping to improve the view.

Saugus
Saugus enhancements made this past year included trail mileage markers being installed by the local Boy Scout Troup! Lastly, over the summer Saugus honored Purple Heart recipients by dedicating a portion of the trail to them. Veterans — including B2C board member Gus Fish — attended the ceremony and were honored for their military service.

Lynn
B2C made great advances this past year with local public officials and neighborhood advocates in laying the necessary groundwork for future developments. A major milestone of this ongoing effort was the first annual Lynn Community Day Bash held in September. B2C coordinated with the local community group One Community – One Voice in the unveiling of a large trailside mural, designed and painted by teens at Raw Art Works. At the invitation of Mayor Kennedy, the Solomon Foundation then advised the Community Development office and civic leaders on undertaking a planning study for the West Lynn Community Path, and we look forward to future implementation.

Wisdom from our first 25 Years to Guide the Next 25

Stephen Winslow
As Bike to the Sea celebrates its 25th year, our current Board of Directors asked me to put together a retrospective about the organization. Rather than simply a re-telling of our story, I’ve decided to offer some wisdom from our first 25 years to help guide and inspire our next 25 years.

The Power of a Great Idea Can Carry You Far and Long
Newcomers express amazement that we’ve been working on the idea of a trail to the sea for 25 years. What gave me and others confidence to work so long on this vision was that the idea of being able to safely bike a few miles from our homes to the sea was so powerful. The idea only became more powerful over time when we realized how critical our trail was to improving our neighborhoods, connecting our communities to Boston and linking with the East Coast Greenway, an urban trail from Maine to Florida.

Take the First Step (Push Off and Keep Pedaling)
Early on, I realized that a great idea will only happen when you take that first step to make it happen (credit for pointing this out goes to Charlie Gandy, former leader of the Texas Bike Coalition who attended a MassBike retreat in the late 1990’s). Despite how marginalized bicycling had become in our communities when we first started 25 years ago, I still saw images on TV about the joy of a getting your first bike and the iconic moment when a youngster learns to pedal off on their own. That inspired me to be sure we focused...
on the joy of bicycling. As long as folks kept showing up to volunteer and ride for Bike to the Sea Day, I knew we could eventually make this happen.

It Takes a Peloton
Great visions for our society can only be realized when individuals join together to achieve them. Over the years, I needed the foundation of a great succession of boards of directors to help give me confidence that the vision was worthy of continued pursuit, to help bring together the resources and people necessary to overcome obstacles and simply to enjoy the journey we had embarked upon. Our organization’s success relied on the early exploration rides with board members such as Joe Longo, Joe Loguidice and Malden City Councillor Marty Gately, Bike to the Sea Day rides joined by the masses and many trail progress rides led by Pete Sutton. Success came from the solid service of presidents including Mike Kelleher, Gail Palladino, Howard Stranger, Jim Tozza and Janet Green along with treasurers including Angela Zimmerman, Eden Garhart-Smith, Gus Fish and Henri Soucy and support from long-time members such as Ginny Mullen, Karyl Stoia and Jay Cobau, and the grant and note taking skills of Steve Leibman. Also through the work on communication to our members and beyond by Dennis Robitaille, Naomi Brave, Sharon and Chris Santillo and Mark Micheli. We take further inspiration from new board members such as Younes Abesi, Sam Amado, Kathleen O’Brien, Vanessa Biasella, Linda Sullivan, Ed Nuñez and Joe Wilson.

Thanks so much to all who served as board members or who joined up as members and volunteers over the years.

…and People Who Like to Get Their Hands Dirty (or Drippy)
No part of the trail had been built until Clay Larsen and Naomi Brave showed up on the scene. Right from the start, Clay and Naomi took action. Clay soon organized the building of the “Pine Tree Path” along the Madeline English School and the wheelbarrow brigade of 20 volunteers who constructed the first 1,000 foot section of trail nearby. This effort brought back interest from old members and drew in new members. Naomi helped create the first template for the “Spokes Newsletter” and went on to lead efforts to paint traffic control boxes and window art displays in Malden.

Thanks so much to Clay and Naomi.

Special thanks to Joe Hattrup and his crew at Ironhorse Preservation as well. Joe’s Marine training gave him the bravado to take great risks to get many local trails underway. Kudos to Lisa Wallace of Lynn who insisted that B2C and others first help make her neighborhood safer and cleaner before focusing on the trail.

…and a Loving Partner and Family
The loving support of my wife and co-founder Helen sustained this effort more than anything else. Her unwavering support for the vision, her help preparing for rides, meetings and dinners and the years she welcomed the monthly meetings at our house are just a few of the contributions she made. Most importantly, I knew that no matter what the expected turnout for a ride, I would never be riding alone.

Bicycling became a family activity we enjoyed with our granddaughters Ashley, Hannah and Teagan and became part of our family culture as seen in photos, pictures on our walls and Christmas trees ornaments. My daughters Marie and Erika have been there at many Bike to the Sea Days and other events. Love and thanks to you all.

No Risk, No Reward (aka Mayors and Town Managers are Important People)
As the effort to “Bike to the Sea” expanded, my career shifted from law to project management. What I realized along the way is that as much as lawyers work to protect their clients from foreseeable risks when negotiating contracts, project managers always have the responsibility for working through the unforeseen circumstances that must be addressed to successfully complete a project. Risk can be managed but not eliminated.

Thanks to Mayors Ragucci, Hanlon and DeMaria of Everett, Mayors Howard and Christenson of Malden and Mayors Rizzo and Arrigo of Revere and Selectmen Deb Panetta, Scott Crabtree and Mike Serino of Saugus for embracing our vision and reaching for the reward despite the risk. Thanks to the numerous City Councillors and Town Meeting members who supported them.

Enjoy the Journey
Ultimately, whether you succeed in realizing your vision or not, be sure to enjoy the ride with friends and family – that’s the best reward of all.

Thanks to all, and best wishes for the next 25 years!
Please give this to a friend or neighbor who might want to

Join Bike to the Sea and Help Support the Northern Strand Trail

____ Individual ($25)    ____ Family ($40)    ____ Supporting ($60)    ____ Contributing ($100)    ____ Lifetime ($300)

Name(s) ________________________________________________________________

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Join online at http://www.biketothesea.com

Please make checks payable to:

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Malden, MA 02148

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