

By [Marc Munroe Dion](#)

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April 25, 2015 7:50PM

## Cyclists celebrate new bike lanes in Tiverton

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TIVERTON — A cool morning, lots of sun and the very hard-to-hear “whoosh” of bicycle tires on asphalt.

They were coming down Riverside Drive, heading for Evans Avenue, about 45 bicycle riders strung out over quite a bit of road. Many of them had ridden in from Portsmouth, over the Sakonnet River Bridge, and all of them were enjoying this crisp Saturday.

The event was meant to celebrate not just riding bicycles itself but the spacious bike lane on the Sakonnet River Bridge and the mapped-out bike routes along some of the roads in Tiverton. Riding seemed like the best way to celebrate and riders from Newport, Tiverton, Fall River and other local communities rode together.

“It’s scenic and it’s safe,” said Peter Moniz, whose Tiverton Trailblazers organization has been struggling to get more bike paths in Tiverton for 15 years.

“We connected in Island Park,” said Bari Freeman, executive director of Bike Newport, a group advocating for more places to ride. The new Sakonnet River Bridge and its bike lane, like the bike lane on Fall River Veteran’s Memorial Bridge, has encouraged local pedal enthusiasts.

“We want more people on bikes,” said Freeman. “There are no bike paths on Aquidneck Island.”

Moniz has been struggling to get a Tiverton bike path to run along old railroad tracks by the town’s waterfront.

“I’ve been working on it for 15 years,” he said.

Brian Pearson, a member of Bike Fall River, said he’d been a little chilly when the ride started at 11 a.m. in Portsmouth but he’d soon warmed up.

“You warm up when you start going up those hills,” he said.

“We have a vision,” Pearson said of his desire to see more bike paths. “We have this beautiful connection to Portsmouth and we want to see it connect to Newport.

“It’s a beautiful path,” Pearson said. “It’s a safe path. It’s a multi-use path, and it’s good for your health.”



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Bike Fall River Chairman Brian Pearson chats with Bike Newport Executive Director Bari Freeman as they lead the pack of cyclists over the Sakonnet River Bridge on Saturday.