

# The Star-Ledger

May 2, 2014

## Route 35 at Shore to be rebuilt with bicycles in mind

By Mike Frassinelli

Like most of their friends in the Rockwellesque Shore community of Lavallette, teenagers Willow Nicolaides and Cady Dering get around by bicycle.

The mix of cyclists, cars and curbside walkers is not always a harmonious one — especially in the summer tourist season, when the town's population swells from 3,000 to 35,000 and the streets and sidewalks turn into an obstacle course.

But as part of a rebuild of Route 35 after Hurricane Sandy, there will be accommodations for bicyclists on 10 of the 12.5 miles between Bay Head and Island Beach State Park.

"It's going to make everything a lot easier," said Cady, 13, during a break from pedal-pushing along Route 35 North. "It's really hard to get around now."

Bicycles and the Shore go together like the boardwalk and salt water taffy.

And the decision last month by the state Department of Transportation to dedicate bike lanes along the popular shore route has thrilled bicycling advocates, who saw the Sandy rebuild as a good test case for whether the state was serious about its "complete streets" initiatives — building roads with drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists in mind.

"Whenever we view a project, we look to incorporate a complete streets element," DOT spokesman Steve Schapiro said. "Route 35 is a perfect place to showcase it. We've got an area that in the summer attracts a lot of families and people come down to the Shore for recreation opportunities — and many of them do enjoy bicycling."

With the exception of Bay Head, where roads are narrow and parking is allowed on the shoulder, dedicated bike lanes will stretch as far south as Island Beach State Park.

"We're really interested in this project because it's a showcase for the rest of the state," said Cyndi Steiner, executive director of the New Jersey Bike & Walk Coalition. "People can come down here on vacation and see what's possible and go back to their hometown and say, 'Why can't we have this here?'"

The most damaging storm in New Jersey history left a chasm in Route 35 in Mantoloking, where the Atlantic Ocean and Barnegat Bay met in October 2012.



**"We're really interested in this project because it's a showcase for the rest of the state."**

*Cyndi Steiner (right) executive director of the N.J. Bike & Walk Coalition, with Janna Chernetz (left) N.J. Advocate for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign*

The \$265 million rebuild of the road — paid for by federal funds — was a chance for New Jersey to build a more resilient and more bicycle and pedestrian friendly Route 35.

"It's a very important thing for our area. First of all, we've never even had bike lanes on our highways, never delineated on our highways," said longtime Lavallette Councilwoman Anita Zalom. "And we need them. People come here with more bikes than cars. They have one car and six bikes tied to it when they come on vacation. It's flat here. They come from North Jersey, maybe where there's hills, they can't ride bikes as comfortably. Perfect to ride a bike here. Not only that, the parking is so bad that it's nice to take your bike and go someplace rather than your car."

The DOT plans to create 5-foot-wide bike lanes in both shoulders along Route 35 in Mantoloking, with the exception of the Herbert Street/Route 528 intersection.

In Lavallette, Toms River and Brick, 5-foot-wide bike lanes will be created along Route 35 North and Route 35 South. At 6th Avenue in Toms River, bicyclists on Route 35 South will switch from a bike lane along the bay side to one on the ocean side, according to the DOT. In Berkeley, Seaside Park and Seaside Heights, accommodations will vary in this busy four-mile stretch of the Barnegat peninsula, where Route 37 connects with Route 35, according to the DOT, but there will be bike lanes in all but 11 blocks.

Where there are no bike lanes, there will be detours and "sharrows," markings designating that the road is to be shared by motorists and bicyclists.

Not everyone is thrilled about the Sandy rebuild plans. Pete Frampton, a Lavallette resident and president of Jersey Carpet, Tile & Wood, wants to see accommodations for pedestrians on Route 35 South.

"If they are going to be spending over a quarter-billion dollars, why not do it right?" said Frampton, who took a photo of a mother pushing a baby carriage on Route 35 South while holding one small child and having another one tag along. He said that while he is happy about the bicycle lanes, "that doesn't do anything for the most common mode of transportation at the Shore — which is your feet."

The DOT noted that there will be 63,000 linear feet of new or rebuilt sidewalk, with a continuous sidewalk along the entire 12.5 miles of the Route 35 northbound lanes; 1,200 ADA-complaint curb ramps; 200 pedestrian countdown signals; and a pedestrian controlled hybrid signal just north of the Route 37 exit to promote safe pedestrian access to the bay in Seaside Heights.

Janna Chernetz, New Jersey advocate for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign regional policy watchdog, was ecstatic over the miles of bicycle lanes in the Route 35 project. She said now there will be a "visual cue" for motorists and cyclists of where they are supposed to be, and touted the economic benefits of bicycling to the Shore region.

"Parking is a commodity around here. Once you leave a parking spot, you're not going to get it back," Chernetz said. "So it's nice that you can come down here and take your bikes and spend your entire day and visit the different towns, going to the shops and shopping and going to the different ice cream stores and not having to worry about trying to find a parking spot."

NJ.com

[http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2014/05/bikes\\_beaches\\_boardwalk\\_route\\_35\\_at\\_the\\_shore\\_to\\_be\\_rebuilt\\_w\\_ith\\_two-wheelers\\_in\\_mind.html](http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2014/05/bikes_beaches_boardwalk_route_35_at_the_shore_to_be_rebuilt_w_ith_two-wheelers_in_mind.html)