

Board of Selectmen Meeting
SELECTMEN'S CHAMBERS, 272 MAIN STREET, TOWNSEND, MA
And VIA ZOOM

TCAM Inc. is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

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Meeting ID: 851 5697 8005

Passcode: 913371

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Preliminaries:

Board of Selectmen meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m. with Joe Shank, Chaz Sexton-Diranian and Veronica Kell present.

Announced that meeting is being recorded, live on channel 9 and will be posted on YouTube afterwards.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

No additions or deletions made to the agenda.

Public

Comment:

Kathy Spofford announced that the Annual Town Election will be held on Monday, April 25, 2022, that January 10 is the first day to obtain nominating papers, and they must be returned by March 7 with 41 valid signatures (47 recommended). Update on Website home page together with listing of open positions and due dates.

Dog licenses are due now. Get them before March 1. Late fees after that. And there is a contest for the number 1 dog tag if get tag before Feb 1.

Todd Melanson noted that water is safe to drink. Well with PFAS was shut off as of August.

Veronica Kell noted that 2 new employees started Jan 3. Please stop by and welcome them.

Joan Savoy thanked the Board for getting people hired and getting water coolers in Town Hall.

Minutes Review:

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Veronica Kell to approve the minutes of 11/8/2021. Motion passed with Chaz Sexton-Diranian and Veronica Kell in favor. Joe Shank recused himself for the discussion and the vote because he was not present for that meeting.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Minutes

01-04-2022, 6 p.m.

Appointments
and Hearings &
Joint meeting
with Planning
Board.

Lance McNally opened the joint meeting for the Planning Board with Lance McNally and Laura Shifrin present.

6:10 p.m. Glen Eaton and Karen Chapman from MRPC explained what the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy document is and how the Town can fit this into the Town's economic plans. CEDS is being updated now. Use of Federal EDA funds. Facilitates brick and mortar projects - industrial/business parks. MRPC \$70000 grant provides planning services.

6:30 p.m. Brad Harris from MRPC gave a presentation on the Bikeability and Walkability Plan (see attached) for the center of town along Rt 119 and along Rt 119 to the high school. He recommended that the Town discuss with MRPC and with MA DOT next steps. The Town can also look at the Complete Streets program.

Appointments of
Personnel

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to re-appoint Veronica Kell as the BOS representative and David Chenelle as the registered voter representative to the Audit Committee for a term to expire on December 30, 2022.. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.

Appointment of the Finance Committee representative will be placed on the 1/18/2022 BOS agenda.

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to reaffirm the appointment of Ross Perry as the interim Town Administrator. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.

Discussion: this is required by Charter, Section 4.4. The ITA contract is written through June 1, 2022, but it must be ratified after 6 months.

Motion was made by by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to appoint Donna Howard to the part-time (14-hour) position of Outreach Coordinator at the Senior Center effective immediately. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.

Discussion: no CORI check or pre-employment physical is required as Donna is already employed part-time as the Lead Van Driver at the Senior Center and this just adds to her responsibilities.

Meeting
Business:
Mandatory
Referral from
ZBA for 478
Main St

Decision: On the Mandatory Referral form state the BOS supports the decision of the ZBA and return to Beth Faxon, Administrative Assistant for ZBA.

Discussion: This is a permit for a business at 478 Main St. A concern was expressed that the building was done before the permit for the business was obtained; This is a structural change in the Historic District; The work done was repair work rather than new construction; Noted that bylaws should be followed.

Web Master
Posting and Job
Description

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to accept the job description for Web Master and to post the position. Vote was unanimous - all in favor by roll call vote.

01-04 2022, 6 p.m.

2022 Seasonal Population

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to attest to the Seasonal Population increase of 0 per ABCC requirement and to sign the form. Vote was unanimous - all in favor by roll call vote. Noted that this form and all licenses must be sent to the state ASAP.

Cybersecurity Awareness Training Grant

A cybersecurity Awareness Training grant has been applied for. Hopefully it will be awarded and we can announce at the 1/19/2022 meeting.

Comcast bill for Vinton Pond build-out

There is an outstanding Comcast bill for \$95,000 +/- that must be paid for the work done to provide broadband to the Vinton Pond neighborhood. Discussion included paying \$15,000 from an old Annual Town Meeting article for MIS services and, since this is from a prior fiscal year, to ask town meeting to allow the remaining payment of \$80,000. Vinny DeSalvo, Grant Administrator, and Ross Perry will look into this.

Approve the FY22 Holiday Schedule

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to accept the FY22 Holiday Observance Schedule. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote. Discussion: Juneteenth holiday is added.

Work Session: ARPA Projects

David Vigeant, Water Superintendent, and Todd Melanson, Board of Water Commissioners, requested funding for generators for the Main St and Cross St well. Currently, there is no generator on either well, i.e., if electricity is lost, the wells are not able to pump water. These two items were #1 and #2 on the Water Department ARPA request list. The BOS had allocated \$200,000 for engineering for the PFAS water treatment project, but because of the allocation of funds for this purpose at Special Town Meeting, only \$130,000 is needed from ARPA funding.

Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to allocate \$150,000 and combine it with the \$70,000 no longer needed for PFAS engineering to allow \$220,000 to be allocated to the Water Department for the purpose of purchasing and installing generators at the Cross St and the Main St wells. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote. The ARPA project list will be updated and sent to CSS.

Town Administrator Update and Report:

TA report includes information on (see attached report):

-Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to sign the contract with Tighe and Bond for the water rate study being conducted for the Water Department. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.

-Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to send a tax acknowledgement for \$1,288,095.50 to Sterilite for the addition to the Senior Center. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.

-In the next payroll, retro pay will be made to the Police Department employees who are currently (as of today) on the force.

-Budget and Capital requests are coming into the TA. Due 1/10. Omnibus budget will then be created and sent to Capital Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and the BOS.

- Welcome to new personnel who started this week - Melissa Dunnet, Treasurer/Collector and Vinny DeSalvo, Grant Administrator
- Official meeting location for BOS meetings will be the Selectmen's Chambers with zoom links provided. This will allow the meeting to continue is a zoom link is in error. Agendas will be updated to note this.
- Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to create stamps for each Selectmen's signature to be used with selectmen's permission if signature is needed and selectman cannot come into building for any reason. Vote was unanimous with all in favor by roll call vote.
- There was an inquiry regarding the availability of Marijuana Retail Licenses. Ross Perry, interim Town Administrator noted that these licenses were available.
- White Mountain IT contract for the Water Department will be placed on the BOS agenda for 1/18.

No liaison reports.

Announcements: The Town received \$1500 +/- back from the Payroll Audit.
ZBA Decision for McNabb's Pharmacy is now available.
MRPC has been awarded an EEA Planning Assistance Grant for updating Townsend's Open Space and Recreation Plan that expired in March of 2020.

Sign warrants Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to sign payroll and bills payable warrant out of session.
Ross Perry, Interim Town Administrator, listed the amounts for all warrants.
Vote was unanimous - all in favor by roll call vote.

Next Meeting January 18, 2022 at 6 p.m.

Adjournment Motion was made by Chaz Sexton-Diranian and seconded by Joe Shank to adjourn at 8:25 pm.
Vote was unanimous - all in favor by roll call vote.

Recording of meeting found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBL22Pg7vAk&list=PLOpCwUSpXeCa-inxdzK0jQMgEx3wCFBbE&index=1>



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Veronica Kell, *Chairman*
Joseph Shank, *Vice Chairman*
Chaz Sexton-Diranian, *Clerk*

SELECTMEN'S MEETING AGENDA FOR JANUARY 4, 2022, AT 6:00 P.M.

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I. PRELIMINARIES - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

1.1 Call the meeting to order and roll call.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

1.3 Announce the meeting is being tape recorded.

1.4 Chairman's Additions or Deletions.

1.5 Public Comment Period.

1.6 Review/Approve the meeting minutes for 11/8/2021.

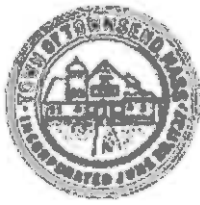
II. APPOINTMENTS AND HEARINGS - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

2.1 (6:10) Glen Eaton, MRPC, Comprehensive Economic Development Strategies discussion

2.2 (6:30) Brad Harris, MRPC, UPWP Bikeability & Walkability Report discussion

III. APPOINTMENTS OF OFFICIALS/PERSONNEL - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

3.1 Re-appoint members to the Audit Committee for a one-year term through Dec 30, 2022: David Chenelle (registered voter), Veronica Kell (BOS), Lynn Pinkerton (Finance Committee)



OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Veronica Kell, *Chairman*
Joseph Shank, *Vice Chairman*
Chaz Sexton-Diranian, *Clerk*

3.2 Appoint (renew appointment) of Interim Town Administrator

3.3 Appoint Donna Howard to the 14-hr/week position of Outreach Coordinator at the Senior Center effective immediately.

IV. MEETING BUSINESS - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

4.1 Discuss Mandatory Referral from ZBA re: 478 Main St

4.2 Discuss job description for Webmaster and vote to post the position.

4.3 Review/Vote for the 2022 Seasonal Population increase per ABCC requirement.

4.4 Announce/acknowledge receipt of EOTSS Municipal Cybersecurity Awareness Training Grant.

4.5 Discussion of payment of Comcast bill for Vinton Pond build-out.

4.6 Approve CY 2022 Holiday observance Schedule

V. WORK SESSION - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

5.0 Discussion of ARPA Projects.

5.1 Town Administrator Updates and Reports.

5.2 Reports from Board liaisons.

5.2.1 General Government

5.2.2 Elected Boards

5.2.3 Public Safety

5.3 Announcements, Communications, etc.

5.3.1 Payroll Audit Results

5.3.2 ZBA Decision - McNabbs

5.3.3 Announce Grant award for update of Open Space and Recreation Plan

5.4 Next meeting - January 18, 2022, at 6 p.m.

5.5 Review and sign payroll and bills payable warrants.

VI. EXECUTIVE SESSION - VOTES MAY BE TAKEN:

VII. ADJOURNMENT:

Selectmen Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 9:14A.M. on Monday, November 8, 2021.
Roll Call: Chairman Veronica Kell - Present, Clerk Chaz Sexton-Diranian - Present.
Interim Town Administrator Perry - Present.

ARPA Projects

The Board met with Jennifer Thompson & Nicole Figueiredo of Capital Strategic Solutions to present an overview of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to the Selectmen. Ms. Thompson outlined some key factors of ARPA. Some of the topics discussed included:

- ARPA signed into law on March 11, 2021
- Created the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Fund
- ARPA is intended to provide support to State & Local governments for the impacts of COVID-19
- Townsend is eligible to receive \$2,841,408.00

Examples of allowed uses for the funding include:

- Responses to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries.
- Essential workers premium pay
- Reduction of revenues due to the COVID-19 health emergency
- To make necessary improvements in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

Examples non-allowed uses for the funding include:

- Depositing funds into pensions
- Directly or indirectly offset a reduction in the net tax revenue of the state or territory resulting from a change in law, regulation, or administrative interpretation.

*see the attached presentation

Jay Sartell Police Chief & David Vigeant Water Superintendent joined the conversation to discuss the allowed uses of the ARPA funds as they pertain to their departments.

Holiday Policies

Selectman Kell reviewed some of the projects that Town Departments have submitted and invited Ms. Thompson back to the November 22nd meeting to help prioritize.

*see attached list of projects discussed

Jay Sartell, Police Chief to submit a letter to the Board with proposed projects for the Police Department.

Non-Union Holiday is Veterans Day but not the day after Thanksgiving

Union Holiday is Veterans Day and the day after Thanksgiving

Police & Fire Union do not mention the day after Thanksgiving in their contracts

T/A Search
Committee

After discussion, Selectman Sexton-Diranian moved to close Town Hall to the public on Veterans Day and the day after Thanksgiving. Selectman Kell seconded. Selectman Kell - yes, Selectman Sexton-Diranian - yes. Selectman Kell amended the motion: any non-union contracted individual who normally works on Friday will take a personal or vacation day or leave without pay for the Friday after Thanksgiving; alternatively, they may work on Veterans Day. Selectman Sexton-Diranian seconded the amendment. Selectman Kell - yes, Selectman Sexton-Diranian - yes.

Selectmen Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2021

Adjournment

Selectman Sexton-Diranian informed the Board all members of the Committee have been sworn-in by the Town Clerk and the Committee met last week and organized. Selectman Sexton-Diranian commented he was voted as the Chairman.

Selectman Sexton-Diranian commented the Committee felt an April 1, 2021 deadline to hire a new Town Administrator was aggressive. He also noted that Interim Town Administrator Perry would be staying on to help transition through the budgeting season.

The Town Administrator Search Committee is requesting the job description and posting. Selectman Sexton-Diranian commented he has reviewed several job descriptions from other communities.

The Board discussed their preferred minimum qualifications to be incorporated into the job description. Selectman Sexton-Diranian to draft the job description and posting and bring back for discussion and approval.

Selectman Sexton-Diranian moved to adjourn at 11:27A.M. Selectman Kell seconded. Vote: Chairman Kell - yes, Clerk Sexton-Diranian - yes.

Video footage of the November 8, 2021 meeting: <https://youtu.be/L1YKndTxVyg>

Materials: agenda, ARPA Fiscal Recovery Fund Spending, Town Administrator Search Criteria



VI. 2019 CEDS Projects

A. Future Route 2 Interchange at South Athol Road

Athol, MA

Originally contemplated in a 1997 study of Route 2 safety improvements by Wilbur Smith Associates, the proposal to add an interchange to service the South Athol Road jobs corridor became the subject of a feasibility study by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission in 2017-2019 as a key component to Athol's long-term community and economic sustainability. South Athol Road is currently the home to several manufacturing businesses employing over 200 people and has hundreds of acres of developable land including the 100-acre Town-owned "Bidwell" site. Provision of a future interchange will open land for development opportunities including job creation, mitigate existing truck traffic concerns in the downtown area and create a future relief valve to the eastern exits which are experiencing increased traffic counts due to development.

B. Downtown Athol Infrastructure Improvements

Athol, MA

In 2019 the Town initiated pre-planning of proposed reinvestment in the urban core to include roads, sidewalks, streetscape, targeted demolition and parking improvements all designed to foster an environment for private investment. Towards this goal, the Town has received approval of a target area designation for federal Community Development Block Grant funds, has received approval as a federal Opportunity Zone, has initiated conceptual planning with the BSC Group and has received District Local Technical Assistance funds to engage the regional planning commission to advance the concept planning towards potential establishment of a formal Urban Renewal Plan.

C. South Athol Road and 100-acre Bidwell Site Development Plan

Athol, MA

The Town has engaged BSC Group, of Worcester, to initiate conceptual planning for potential development of the 100-acre Town-owned "Bidwell Site" on South Athol Road. With a preliminary report due in 2019, the Town envisions a mix of uses at the property that will benefit the community from both an economic and service perspective. Key to determining the vision and final development plan is the potential of a new interchange on Route 2 at South Athol Road, less than one-half mile from the Bidwell Site. The Town envisions improvements to South Athol Road to include extension of water and wastewater to the site and – in conjunction with future access to Route 2 – to provide access to jobs and markets while relieving traffic and truck congestion downtown.



D. Millers River Greenway

Athol and Orange, MA

The Town of Athol and neighboring town of Orange have re-engaged in discussions to advance the vision of a greenway linking the historic town centers. The so-called Millers River Greenway would build upon the existing “Blue Trail” between the two communities on the river itself with an ancillary greenway that would foster eco-tourism through pedestrian and bicycle links. An initial \$2 million on bonding authority exists within a state transportation bond bill which is anticipated to leverage further funding options to achieve this vision.

E. LaunchSpace, Inc.

Athol, MA

LaunchSpace, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit community makerspace offering classes and workshops in wide ranging topics including 3D printing, woodworking, pottery, metalworking, IT & robotics, and a variety of arts and crafts. In addition to being a member-based community workshop, LaunchSpace is partnering with local schools, community colleges, universities, and businesses to develop programming in workforce education and development as well as provide services in entrepreneurial support and business incubation. The organization hopes that with its three-tiered approach it will be able to create a replicable model for post-industrial revitalization in semi-rural communities. Currently, LaunchSpace operates two locations: one of which is a 24,000 square foot former elementary school in Athol – located inside the Montachusett Region Economic Development District (EDD) – while the other is located on the third floor of the Orange Innovation Center (OIC) in the neighboring town of Orange just beyond the EDD boundaries. To date, LaunchSpace has received \$380,000 in state funding through MassDevelopment’s Collaborative Workspace Program (CWP) to support its mission of local economic and community development. Future funds will be used to support facility upgrades as well as operations and program development.

F. Rockbestos-Suprenant Site

Clinton, MA

Located at 172 Sterling Street, the Rockbestos-Suprenant Site had been producing large cable and component parts for ships and industry from as early as 1918 until 2004, when Rockbestos left the site for its headquarters in Connecticut. Since the site’s closing, the empty factory – including at least five buildings and several loading docks – was razed due to safety concerns. The property, off Route 62, remains in a visible section of town with significant redevelopment potential. Plans for the project include the remediation and redevelopment of the remaining brownfield for industrial or commercial use.



G. *Bigelow Spinning Mills*

Clinton, MA

The Bigelow Spinning Mills, located on 460-530R Main Street, is a blighted mill complex which includes eight brick mill buildings dating from 1810 to 1898. The earliest buildings were constructed for Poignand and Plant. The Bigelow Carpet Company was incorporated in 1854, and ten years later, it embarked on an extensive construction campaign. Many of the buildings in this complex date from the Bigelow's expansion phase. The mill ultimately closed in 1932. Today, the Bigelow Mill's brick tower still dominates Clinton's skyline. Manufacturing and commercial companies occupy portions of the site while a smaller, four-story brick building was recently renovated for residential condominiums. Plans for the site include revitalization of the mill complex within downtown for industrial, commercial, or mixed use.

H. *285 West Boylston Street-37 South Meadow Road*

Clinton, MA

The 23-acre site spanning from 285 West Boylston Street to 37 South Meadow Road is being planned for future industrial or commercial use, potentially in conjunction with lands within the neighboring Town of Sterling.

I. *Clinton STEM Center*

Clinton, MA

The Town of Clinton has been proactively studying the feasibility of a STEM center intended to help foster local innovation and entrepreneurship, as well as support local manufacturers and residents through workplace skills training. The proposed project would be located at 42 Church Street in a former fire station now owned by the school department.

J. *Counterpane Brook Basic Drainage Improvements*

Clinton, MA

Improvements to surface and sub-surface drainage infrastructure, primarily along Union, Main, and High Streets, are needed to promote resiliency, preserve jobs and provide for business expansion.

K. *Downtown Revitalization*

Clinton, MA

Infrastructure improvements and targeted investment within the 112-acre Downtown Clinton Target Area, to create and retain employment and advance innovation.



L. Clinton Collaborative Workspace

Clinton, MA

The development of the Clinton Collaborative Workspace originated in recommendation made within the Bigelow Mills Feasibility Analysis. The project will aim to create jobs and advance innovation in the region.

M. Salerno Circle

Devens, MA

MassDevelopment owns 118-acre Salerno Circle, a former US Army housing area in the Devens redevelopment. Building have been removed and the site can accommodate office, R&D, and life science projects. The site is flat and partially cleared and is accessed from Marne Road, a private ½ mile drive that winds through the Red Tail Golf Club. The property is surrounded by woods and has good exposure to Route 2. Commercial development at Salerno will require roadway and utility infrastructure improvements.

N. 111 Hospital Road

Devens, MA

MassDevelopment owns 111 Hospital Road, a 60-acre site that is being marketed for office, R&D, light manufacturing, and life science projects. The site is partially cleared and is comprised of four former Army housing areas which have all been demolished. 111 Hospital Road is serviced with all utilities and can support up to 1,000,000 SF.

O. Red Tail Heights

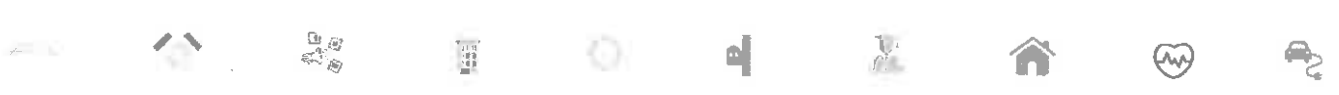
Devens, MA

Red Tail Heights is a shovel-ready, 25.4 acre-land site that overlooks the Red Tail Golf Course and club house. The lot is partially cleared and can accommodate up to 350,000 SF for office, R&D, life science, and light manufacturing. Red Tail Heights is serviced by all utilities.

P. 200 Boulder Drive

Fitchburg, MA

The Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority (FRA) currently owns a former mill building at 200 Boulder Drive comprising of 36,000 sf and has been laying vacant since 2004. The FRA would like to market the property, which has a great industrial vibe, in hopes that a commercial entity would move in within the year. Once rented, this property will be a source of revenue for the FRA and is estimated to create as many as 50 or more jobs depending on the nature of the business renting the space.



Q. Lagoon Site, West Fitchburg

Fitchburg, MA

The Lagoons site, currently owned by the FRA is a vacant, large swatch of land, ripe for large-scale commercial or mixed-use development that will create jobs both during the planning and construction phase and for the long-term thereafter. It is the FRA's intention to develop and/or sell the property in accordance to the plan of use communicated by the City's Office of Community Development. The FRA is partnering with the City of Fitchburg's Community Development Office for various funding programs for the Lagoon Site including the Site Readiness Program and other MassDevelopment funding resources.

R. Sandpits, 0 Airport Road

Fitchburg, MA

The Sandpit, currently owned by the FRA, is a vacant, large swatch of land ripe for large-scale commercial or mixed-use development that will create jobs both during the planning and construction phase and for the long-term thereafter. It is the FRA's intention to develop and/or sell the property in accordance to the plan of use communicated by the City's Office of Community Development. The FRA is partnering with the City of Fitchburg's Community Development Office for various funding programs for the Sandpit including the Site Readiness Program, and other MassDevelopment funding resources.

S. Wachusett Business Incubator


Gardner, MA

The Wachusett Business Incubator (WBI) is located in newly renovated space at the New England Woodenware campus in Gardner. Developed by a consortium of local business leaders, the goal of the WBI is to foster economic growth in the North Central Massachusetts area by providing targeted assistance in a cooperative environment to innovative entrepreneurs. The WBI will guide them to cultivate their business skills, and provide the assistance necessary to take their startup companies along the path to commercial maturity.

T. Rear Main Street Corridor Project

Gardner, MA

The City of Gardner is currently partnering with the Gardner Redevelopment Authority (GRA) to implement its Downtown Urban Renewal Plan. A key component of this Plan is the Rear Main Street Corridor Redevelopment Project, which will redevelop an underutilized, blighted industrial corridor. Phase I of this project was completed in June of 2018 and included the construction of a new roadway and multi-use path connecting the public library to the new police station anchoring each end of the corridor.



Phase I included construction of additional parking to support existing businesses and housing units, community space, and additional business opportunities along the rear of the Main Street properties. This project also enhances a private sector development completed by Cumberland Farms, Inc. The project provides a secondary access to the site for emergency vehicles and customers, while alleviating traffic congestion on Main Street. Projected employment growth initially will be temporary construction jobs estimated at 30. The estimated total job creation for the industrial park is 880 (Phase I being estimated at 500 and Phase II estimated at 380 jobs created).

U. The Mill Street Corridor

Gardner, MA


The Mill Street Corridor Urban Renewal Area (the URA or Project Area) is an industrially developed section of South Gardner. Much of the URA historically contained now-defunct furniture manufacturing businesses, including the S. Bent & Brothers Company that operated from about 1867 to 2001. The URA is approximately 45 acres, including sections of Mill and Winter Streets and a short segment of an inactive railroad spur.

The overall goal for the Project is to create a framework for the redevelopment of the Mill Street Corridor, thus restoring unproductive and contaminated properties to productive use that will generate commercial and industrial training and job opportunities, foster an environment for businesses to thrive and create sustainable jobs provide business opportunities for economic development, and increase the City's tax base. The objectives described below were established for the Project in order to achieve this goal.

- Transform Gardner's historic manufacturing economic base to serve 21st century industry through redevelopment of former industrial properties, and in so doing increase the number and diversity of well-paying jobs in the City.
- Encourage and preserve economic diversity and quality of life by providing opportunities for businesses serving a diversity of incomes and skills.
- Increase real estate tax income generating properties in the URA.
- Encourage private sector investment and utilize public funds judiciously and strategically as a catalyst for private investment.
- Facilitate land assembly and disposition to advance the goals, objectives and activities of the URP.
- Integrate the URA with adjacent residential and commercial uses, as well as transportation networks, be developing an improved roadway network and recreation trails.

V. Gardner Industrial Park Study

Gardner, MA



The City of Gardner has two industrial parks, which are at 95% capacity for build out. With a need for emerging manufacturing and office business spaces, the City of Gardner is in the process of identifying land for a new industrial park. The City and designated consultant will determine eligibility and identify suitable land for the new business park. Once identified the City will need federal and state assistance to construct and complete the build out. The new business park will expand opportunities for economic growth.

W. Downtown Street Scape Improvements

Gardner, MA

A 5-year plan to improve the Downtown infrastructure, is an extensive project that includes water main replacements, service connections, fire connections, and sewer improvements. Complete Streets are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all the users of our roadways, trails, and transit systems, including pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, motorists, commercial vehicles, and emergency vehicles and for people of all ages and of all abilities. Furthermore, Complete Streets principles contribute toward safety, health, economic viability, and the quality of life in a community by providing accessible efficient connections between home, schools, work, recreation and retail destinations by improving the pedestrian and vehicular environments throughout communities. The City of Gardner's Downtown Street Scape Program plan is to implement six Priority Projects including signalized crossings, accessible ramps and crosswalks, safety lighting, and improved bicycle signage, lane markings, and connections.

X. Bike & Pedestrian Bridge over Route 140


Gardner, MA

Plans for a completed bridge over Route 140 to complete The North Central Pathway trail that winds through Gardner into Winchendon. This Gardner section begins at the Veterans Memorial Skating Rink on the eastern shore of Crystal Lake and goes behind Heywood Hospital where there is a Wellness Loop off the paved path. The plan is to implement a complete bike trail connecting the historic downtowns of Gardner and Winchendon.

Y. Ayer Road Corridor

Harvard, MA

The Ayer Road corridor remains Harvard's most prominent and nearly singular opportunity for commercial development and other complementary land uses. The three-phase proposed project for the Ayer Road Commercial Corridor is intended to be cumulative and include an initial market analysis, a vision plan for the Ayer Road corridor, and the development of a very carefully crafted set of zoning tools to facilitate and realize the vision. At this time there are two priority components of the Ayer Road Corridor project for which funds are being sought. The first priority is to obtain funds to retain a consultant to conduct a complete market analysis for the



Ayer Road corridor and include a fiscal impact analysis of the findings. The second priority is to obtain funds to conduct a comprehensive water and sewer feasibility study of the Ayer Road corridor including to determine the optimal plan for connecting to and carrying the system from Devens to a location along Ayer Road corridor where it can service the entire Commercial or "C" district.

Z. Spanish American Center
Leominster, MA

The Spanish American Center, Inc. is a private, non-profit organization chartered in 1966 by members of the Catholic clergy to respond to the needs of the Hispanic community. The Center began as an outreach and information and referral network. In 1972 the Center was incorporated. Currently, the Center is the only agency in Leominster specifically oriented towards the Spanish-speaking community, estimated at over 15,000 residents. Today the Center offers multiple programs, has revenues in excess of \$500,000 and is State Office of Minority and Women Business Assistance (SOMWBA) certified. Funds are being sought to support the operations the on-site commercial kitchen which currently serves healthy meals to low-income students and residents throughout the community. The facility would also be able to support food preparation training and certification for members of the community, and help meet the growing need for food preparation workers throughout the region.

AA. Revitalization of Downtown Leominster
Leominster, MA

With Leominster's growth, downtown has experienced significant traffic increases. The City needs to look at pedestrian crossings and traffic calming measures. Significant changes need to take place, particularly in front of City Hall and the Leominster Library. At this time, the City's general fund is the only source of funding for this project, which would include both design and construction work. Funds would be used to conduct a planning study and ultimately construction of new traffic measures. Retaining and creating jobs in the downtown relies on downtown safety and accessibility.

BB. Sholan Farms
Leominster, MA

Sholan Farms is a City-owned apple orchard and the last pick-your-own orchard in the birthplace of Johnny Appleseed. The farm is home to 32 varieties of apples among other crops and helps drive Leominster's economy. The farm is unable to expand at this time due to lack of water and sewer infrastructure. Funds would be used to extend needed infrastructure from Pleasant Street at Hardy Drive to the farm.



CC. Connection between Adams Street and Downtown

Leominster, MA

The City of Leominster and the private sector have together invested a significant amount of funds to bring infrastructure and housing to Adams Street, just a few streets away from Leominster's downtown center. It is critical to create a corridor between the two. The proposed project would include the purchase of a parcel of land and then creation of a physical corridor between the 200 housing units and commercial space on Adams Street with the downtown. Funds would be used to conduct a planning study and ultimately the construction of a new corridor.

DD. Downtown Parking Garage

Leominster, MA

The City of Leominster is looking to build a downtown parking garage. There are currently 1,500 employees working downtown and parking is nearly at full capacity. The City is proposing to build a parking garage in the immediate downtown area in order to create and retain jobs. The City already owns the land in question; funds would be used for design and construction of the proposed parking garage.

EE. Revitalization of Downtown Townsend

Townsend, MA

With Townsend's growth, rich cultural history, and significant interest in reusing vacant buildings as well as developing public areas for outdoor activities in and near the Downtown Commercial District, the Town is seeking to develop a Downtown Townsend revitalization strategy. The strategy would include a plan for reuse of vacant buildings, installation of new or replacement of existing infrastructure, assessment of walkability and wayfinding, pedestrian amenities, as well as construction of a new corridor in the Townsend Downtown Commercial District.

FF. Simplex Drive Industrial District

Westminster, MA

The Simplex Drive industrial district is the Town of Westminster's largest industrial park. The park's infrastructure (roads and wastewater disposal system) are privately owned and are in need of upgrades. These upgrades will help attract new industries to the park, which still has a considerable amount of vacant developable land. The Town has worked closely with the State (MassDevelopment and MassEcon) to promote the park to potential tenants and evaluate its infrastructure needs. Given the amount of developable land, it is believed the Industrial District could support as many as 1,000 jobs.



GG. Westminster Business Park Industrial District

Westminster, MA

The Westminster Business Park is the Town's second largest industrial park. The park is being built on an active gravel removal site. The park has been under construction for well over a decade and it will take another decade for the park to be fully complete. The park is being designed to accommodate as much as 1.5 million square feet of industrial floor space. The park's infrastructure will eventually be turned over to the Town of Westminster once complete. The Town and the park owner have been working together to secure funds for the park's infrastructure. In 2015, the Town secured a USDA Rural Development grant that enabled the Town to address a longstanding sewer capacity problem in the area where the park is located. However, more funding is needed to complete the park's infrastructure. The infrastructure, once in place, will help attract new industries to the business park.

HH. Commercial Drive Extension

Winchendon, MA

This project is another phase to the development of the Hillview Business Park. This development expands onto land owned by the Winchendon Redevelopment Authority. Two developers have signed on. Both investments total 13 million and have the potential to create 50 jobs. However, all is contingent upon MassWorks funding to construct the roadway into the site.

II. Enteral Street (Winchendon Village Downtown Area)

Winchendon, MA

The town has been successful in securing funding for the reconstruction of Central Street through the TIP program and the development of a branding and wayfinding plan. However, funds are needed for water and sewer in conjunction with the reconstruction. Funds are also need to further revitalization projects through a sign and façade program and to realize the recommendations of the branding and wayfinding plan.

JJ. Lincoln Ave Ext. Revitalization (Toy Industrial Park Area)

Winchendon, MA

Brownfield assessment and remediation funds are necessary to create town owned "Pad Ready" sites in an area that is serviced by Town Water, Sewer and Three Phase power. The sites are part of the Toy Town Industrial Park area. The town owns one site and is in the process of obtaining the other. The sites need to be assessed and the remediation performed for them to be marketed as pad ready. They are in a location that substantial investment has already taken place (sewer, water, electric, etc.).



KK. Blair Square Redesign

Winchendon, MA

The project aims to reconfigure traffic patterns of Blair Square that take into consideration multiple users. Blair Square is the “gateway” to downtown commercial area. It needs to be reconfigured to accommodate multiple types of users and improve safety. Additionally, it serves as the gateway to the downtown area but its present state detracts rather than attracts.

LL. Poland / Streeter Schools

Winchendon, MA

Revitalization of two school of prominent buildings in downtown area clearing the area of blight "town owned" properties to promote health and vibrancy. Improved "quality of life" leads to the overall financial of the community. The two vacant schools are slated to be redeveloped into veteran housing pending funding.



U.S. Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration



**COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
CEDS
SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS**

Note: This document provides a synopsis of the requirements for comprehensive economic development strategies. For further information, interested parties are directed to section 302 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 3192) and EDA's regulations at 13 C.F.R. part 303. The document is intended to serve as a convenient source for requirements relating to the CEDS. Nothing in this document is intended to supersede or otherwise modify EDA's statute, regulations, policies or procedures.

Introduction: A comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The CEDS should analyze the regional economy and serve as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources. A CEDS integrates a region's human and physical capital planning in the service of economic development. Integrated economic development planning provides the flexibility to adapt to global economic conditions and fully utilize the region's unique advantages to maximize economic opportunity for its residents by attracting the private investment that creates jobs for the region's residents. A CEDS must be the result of a continuing economic development planning process developed with broad-based and diverse public and private sector participation, and must set forth the goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic development problems of the region and clearly define the metrics of success. Finally, a CEDS provides a useful benchmark by which a regional economy can evaluate opportunities with other regions in the national economy.

Who should develop a CEDS? A Planning Organization seeking to formulate and implement a regional economic development program will benefit from developing a CEDS. Successful economic development efforts are based on CEDS that provide an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. The Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (PWEDA), requires a CEDS in order to apply for investment assistance under EDA's Public Works or Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. At EDA's discretion, EDA may accept CEDS that it has funded or CEDS prepared independently of EDA investment assistance or oversight.

The following sections set out below on "Planning Organizations" and "Strategy Committees" cover the requirements for EDA-funded CEDS, while the remainder of this document pertains to technical requirements for CEDS. *It should be noted that in determining the acceptability of a CEDS prepared independently of EDA investment assistance or oversight for projects under 13 C.F.R. parts 305 or 307, EDA may in its discretion determine that the CEDS is acceptable without it fulfilling every requirement set out in 13 C.F.R. § 303.7. In doing so, EDA shall consider the circumstances surrounding the application for investment assistance, including emergencies or natural disasters, and the fulfillment of the requirements of Section 302 of PWEDA.*

A. EDA-funded CEDS

Pursuant to 13 C.F.R. § 303.6, if EDA awards Investment Assistance to a Planning Organization to develop, revise, or replace a CEDS, the Planning Organization must follow the procedures set forth in paragraphs A.1 and A.2.

1. Planning Organization: A Planning Organization (as defined in 13 C.F.R. § 303.2), typically an Economic Development District (EDD) or Indian Tribe, may be eligible for EDA planning investment assistance. The purpose of such assistance is to develop a CEDS for a specific EDA-approved region. The Planning Organization is responsible for:

- Appointing a Strategy Committee (CEDS Committee);
- Developing and submitting to EDA a CEDS that complies with 13 C.F.R. § 303.7;
- Making a new or revised CEDS available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the CEDS to EDA;
- Obtaining approval of the CEDS from EDA;
- After obtaining approval of the CEDS, submitting to EDA an updated CEDS performance report annually. The performance report, in addition to reporting progress on CEDS implementation, should also discuss community and private sector participation in the CEDS effort. Any performance report that results in a change in the technical components of the EDA-approved CEDS must be available for review and comment by the public for a period of at least thirty (30) days prior to submission of the performance report to EDA;
- Submitting a copy of the CEDS to any Regional Commission if any part of the EDA-approved EDD region is covered by that Commission;
- Submitting a new CEDS to EDA at least every five (5) years, unless EDA or the Planning Organization determines that a new CEDS is required earlier due to changed circumstances.

2. Strategy Committee: The Strategy Committee is the entity identified by the Planning Organization as responsible for developing, revising, or replacing the CEDS. The Strategy Committee must represent the main economic interests of the region, and must include Private Sector Representatives (defined in 13 C.F.R. § 300.3, with respect to any for-profit enterprise, as any senior management official or executive holding a key decision making position, or that person's designee) as a majority of its membership. In addition, the Planning Organization should ensure that the Strategy Committee also includes:

- Public officials;
- Community leaders;
- Representatives of workforce development boards;
- Representatives of institutions of higher education;
- Minority and labor groups; and
- Private individuals.

Strategy Committees representing Indian Tribes or States may vary.

B. Technical Requirements

Pursuant to 13 C.F.R. § 303.7, a Planning Organization must include the following information in a CEDS submitted to EDA.—

1. Background: The CEDS must contain a background of the economic development situation of the region that paints a realistic picture of the current condition of the region. This background must include a discussion of the economy, population, geography, workforce development and use, transportation access, resources, environment, and other pertinent information.

2. Analysis of Economic Development Problems and Opportunities: The CEDS must include an in-depth analysis of the economic development problems and opportunities that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the regional makeup of human and economic assets, and problems and opportunities posed by external and internal forces affecting the regional economy. This analysis must:

- Incorporate relevant material from other government-sponsored or supported plans and demonstrate consistency with applicable State and local workforce investment strategies.
- Identify past, present, and projected future economic development investments in the region.
- Identify and analyze **economic clusters** within the region.

3. CEDS Goals and Objectives – Defining Regional Expectations: The CEDS must contain a section setting forth goals and objectives necessary to solve the economic problems, or capitalize on the resources, of the region. Any strategic project, program, or activity identified in the CEDS should work to fulfill these goals and objectives.

- Goals are broad, primary regional expectations
- Objectives are more specific than goals, clearly measurable, and stated in realistic terms considering what can be accomplished over the five (5) year time frame of the CEDS.

4. Community and Private Sector Participation: The CEDS must include a section discussing the relationship between the community in general and the private sector in the development and implementation of the CEDS. Public and private sector partnerships are critical to the implementation of the CEDS.

5. Strategic Projects, Programs and Activities: The CEDS must contain a section which identifies regional projects, programs and activities designed to implement the Goals and Objectives of the CEDS. This section should identify and describe:

Suggested Projects-

- All suggested projects, programs and activities and the projected number of jobs to be created as a result.
- Lead organizations responsibilities for execution of the projects.

Vital Projects- A prioritization of vital projects, programs, and activities that address the region's greatest needs or that will best enhance the region's competitiveness, including sources of funding for past and potential future investments. These can be overarching "themes" for regional economic development success and is expected to include components. Funding sources should not be limited to EDA programs.

6. CEDS Plan of Action: The plan of action, as described in the CEDS, implements the goals and objectives of the CEDS in a manner that:

- Promotes economic development and opportunity;
- Fosters effective transportation access;
- Enhances and protects the environment;
- Maximizes effective development and use of the workforce consistent with any applicable State or local workforce investment strategy;
- Promotes the use of technology in economic development, including access to high-speed telecommunications;
- Balances resources through sound management of physical development; and
- Obtains and utilizes adequate funds and other resources.

The CEDS must also contain a section that discusses the methodology for cooperating and integrating the CEDS with a State's economic development priorities.

7. Performance Measures: The CEDS must contain a section that lists the performance measures used to evaluate the Planning Organization's successful development and implementation of the CEDS, including but not limited to the:

- Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS;
- Number and types of investments undertaken in the region;
- Number of jobs retained in the region;
- Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS; and
- Changes in the economic environment of the region.

These are not meant to be the only performance measures for the CEDS. Most Planning Organizations developing a CEDS will benefit from developing additional quantitative and qualitative measures that will allow them to evaluate progress toward achieving the goals identified as important in their regions.

For more information: www.eda.gov

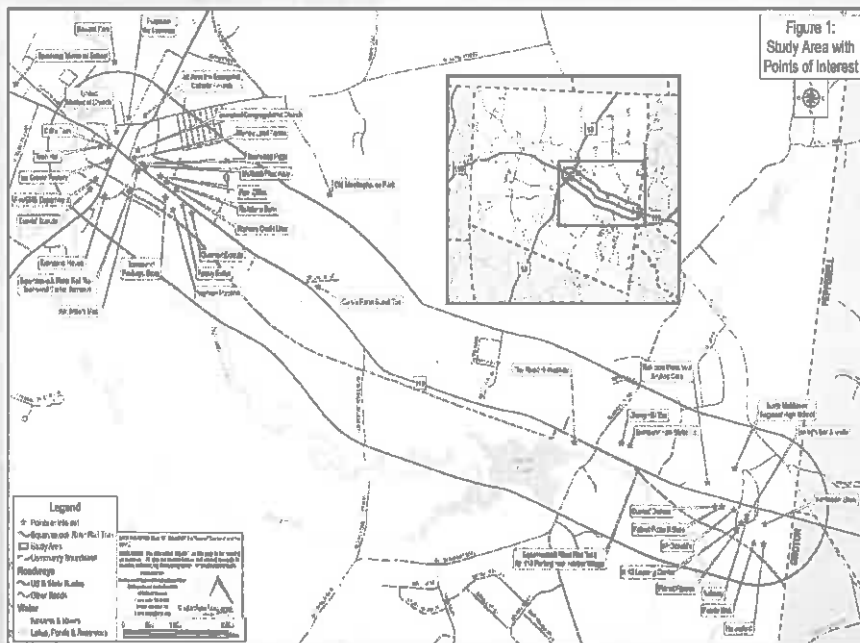
Walkability Study For Townsend, MA



Townsend Walkability Study

Purpose

To assist the town of Townsend with a Walkability Study for their Town Center and School/Shopping area.

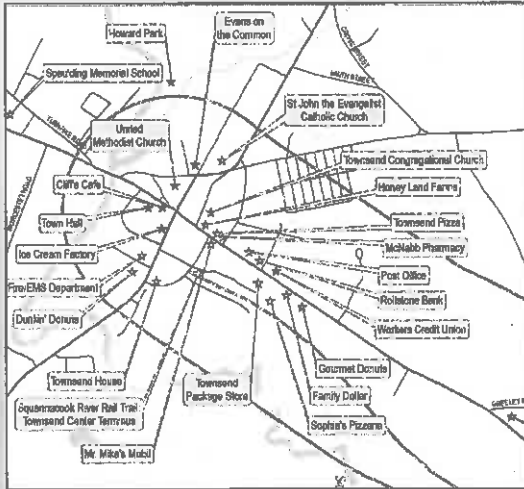


Townsend Walkability Study

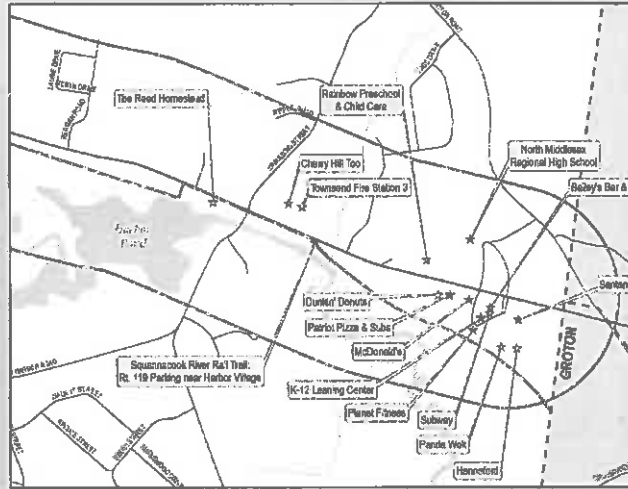
Study Process

1. Establish a Study Area – Town Center & School/ Shopping Plaza

Town Center



School/Senior Center



Study Process

1. Study Area
2. Walking Audit

WALK TOWNSEND!



When: MAY 1, 10:00 AM (Rain Date 5/2) Where: TOWNSEND TOWN HALL

By walking the streets of downtown Townsend, we can identify positive and negative aspects affecting pedestrian travel and prioritizing specific solutions that will increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians. Potential solutions could include addressing missing sidewalk links, intersections, crosswalks, signage and traffic calming. Come let us know how Townsend can be more pedestrian friendly!

****Masks and social distancing will be required****

Agenda

- 10:00 - 10:15 – Introduction & project overview
- 10:15 - 11:15 – Walking audit
- 11:15 - 11:45 – Review findings, come up with possible solutions, wrap up

All Townsend residents, business owners, public officials, young & old! All are welcome!



Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission

Walking Audit

- May 1, 2021



Walking Audit Observations

- Sidewalks
- Roadways
- Crosswalks
- Trails
- Parks/Public Gathering Spots
- Shade Trees & Benches
- Parking
- Attractions



Study Process

1. Study Area
2. Walking Audit
3. **Data Collection**

Data Collection

- **Traffic Volumes** – Highest in the town center area along Route 119 (avg. 7,000-10,000 vehicles per day)
- **Crash History** –Townsend had a total of 438 accidents over the past 3 years and 178 of those occurred within the study area (41%)
- **Inventory of Road Facilities** – Sidewalks, crosswalks and road signs were inventoried and mapped.

Study Process

1. Study Area
2. Walking Audit
3. Data Collection
4. Recommendations

Recommendations

Sidewalks

- **Repair existing sidewalks where needed**
- **Continue sidewalk along Rt. 119 from McDonalds to Dunkin' Donuts**
- **Add sidewalks and/or bike lanes to Railroad Street**
- **Add sidewalks and/or bike lanes along Depot St from Rail Trail parking area to Main St**
- **Add sidewalk along Highland St from Brookline St to the Common parking area**
- **Provide & maintain pedestrian lighting**



Recommendations

Crosswalks

- Consider additional crosswalk along Rt. 13 to Railroad St.
- Consider additional crosswalk along Rt. 119 from Workers Credit Union to the shopping plaza
- Consider traffic calming techniques at major crosswalk locations along Rt. 119
- Place crosswalks that connect to sidewalks that have ADA accessible ramps
- Add advanced warning signs or flashing beacons at high traffic areas



Recommendations

Roadways

- Conduct a traffic study at the intersection of Highland St & Brookline Rd
- Consider bike lanes or sharrows wherever possible
- Consider traffic calming techniques along Rt. 119 near the schools and town center to reduce speeds & increase safety
- Tighten up long curb cuts to reduce possible vehicle/pedestrian conflicts.



Recommendations

Other

- **Add striping and signage for public parking areas**
- **Continue with Complete Streets efforts**
- **Consider establishing a Safe Routes to School program**
- **Continue to work towards the completion of an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan.**



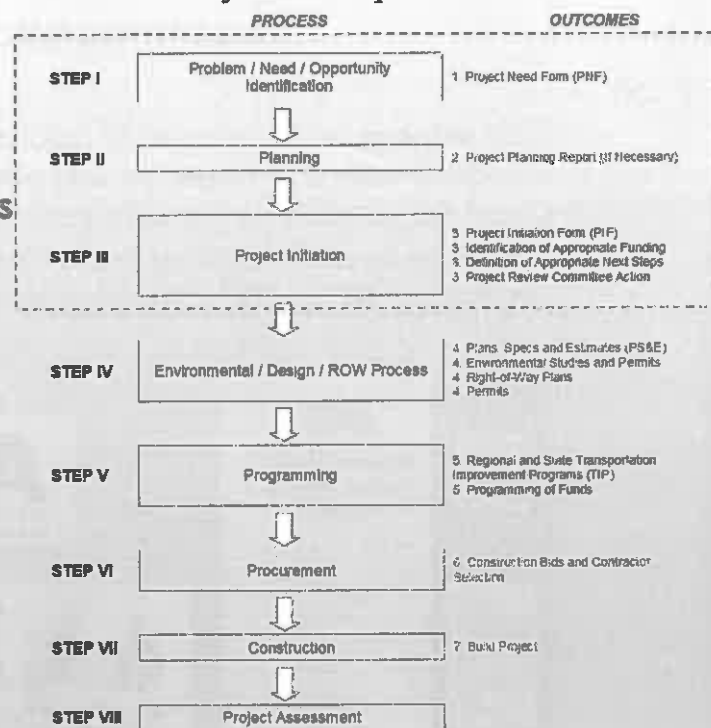
Study Process

1. Study Area
2. Walking Audit
3. Data Collection
4. Recommendations
5. Next Steps

Next Steps

- Project Development
- Other Funding Programs
 - Safe Routes to School
 - Complete Streets
 - Shared Streets & Spaces
- Chapter 90

Project Development Process



MassDOT Highway Initiating a Project

Source: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-highway-initiating-a-project>
<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-highway-initiating-a-project>

MassDOT initiates new projects through a formal 3-step process using the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT). You need a GeoDOT account to log into MaPIT and initiate new projects.

For more information about the project development process, refer to Chapter 2 of the Project Development and Design Guide.

Step 1 - Project Need

Using MaPIT, project proponent identifies project needs.

Step 2 - Project Initiation

Using MaPIT, project proponent works with a MassDOT District Office or other MassDOT Section to define project scope, costs, timeline, impacts and responsibilities.

Step 3 - Project Review Committee

District Office or other MassDOT Section submits project to the Project Review Committee for approval.

Once approved by MassDOT and the PRC, project is incorporated into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Montachusett MPO.

Questions?

Sheri Bean – sbean@mrpc.org or 978-345-7376 x315





MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL WALKABILITY STUDY

Townsend, MA

September 2021

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The Montachusett MPO and the MRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes and regulations in all programs and activities. The Montachusett MPO operates without regard to race, color, national origin, English Proficiency, ancestry, creed, income, gender, age and/or disability. Any person who believes him/herself or any specific class of persons, to be subject to discrimination prohibited by Title VI may by him/herself or by representative file a written complaint with the MRPC or the MPMPO. Complaints are to be filed no later than 180 days from the date of the alleged discrimination. Please contact Glenn Eaton at 978-345-7376 ext. 310 for more information.



Walkability Study For Townsend, MA



Rt. 119 & Rt. 13, Townsend

Prepared for the town of Townsend

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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September 2021

Notice of Nondiscrimination Rights and Protections to Beneficiaries

Federal "Title VI/Nondiscrimination" Protections

The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) operates its programs, services, and activities in compliance with federal nondiscrimination laws including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI), the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, and related statutes and regulations. Title VI prohibits discrimination in federally assisted programs and requires that no person in the United States of America shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin (including limited English proficiency), be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal assistance. Related federal nondiscrimination laws administered by the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, or both prohibit discrimination on the basis of age, sex, and disability. These protected categories are contemplated within MRPC's Title VI Programs consistent with federal interpretation and administration. Additionally, MRPC provides meaningful access to its programs, services, and activities to individuals with limited English proficiency, in compliance with US Department of Transportation policy and guidance on federal Executive Order 13166.

State Nondiscrimination Protections

MRPC also complies with the Massachusetts Public Accommodation Law, M.G.L. c 272 §§ 92a, 98, 98a, prohibiting making any distinction, discrimination, or restriction in admission to or treatment in a place of public accommodation based on race, color, religious creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or ancestry. Likewise, MRPC complies with the Governor's Executive Order 526, section 4 requiring all programs, activities, and services provided, performed, licensed, chartered, funded, regulated, or contracted for by the state shall be conducted without unlawful discrimination based on race, color, age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, disability, veteran's status (including Vietnam-era veterans), or background.

Additional Information

To request additional information regarding Title VI and related federal and state nondiscrimination obligations, please contact:

Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)
and Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

Title VI Coordinator

MRPC

464 Abbott Ave:

Leominster, MA 01453

(978) 345-7376

geaton@mrpc.org

Complaint Filing

To file a complaint alleging a violation of Title VI or related federal nondiscrimination law, contact the Title VI Specialist (above) within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct.

To file a complaint alleging a violation of the state's Public Accommodation Law, contact the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination within 300 days of the alleged discriminatory conduct at:

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD)

One Ashburton Place, 6th Floor

Boston, MA 02109

617-994-6000 ~ TTY: 617-994-6196

Language Assistance

English: If this information is needed in another language, please contact the MRPC Title VI Coordinator at 978-345-7376.

Spanish: Si necesita esta información en otro idioma, por favor contacte el coordinador del MRPC del Título VI al 978-345-7376.

Portuguese: Caso esta informação seja necessária em outro idioma, favor contar o Coordenador em Título VI do MRPC pelo telefone 978-345-7376.

French: Si cette information est nécessaire dans une autre langue, s'il vous plaît communiquer avec le coordonnateur MRPC Titre VI au 978-345-7376.

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MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>APPOINTED BY SELECTMEN/MAYOR</u>	<u>APPOINTED BY PLANNING BOARD</u>
Ashburnham	Rosemarie Meissner	Roger Hoyt
Ashby		Alan Pease
Athol	Dick Kilhart	
Ayer	Shaun Copeland	Mark Archambault
Clinton	Phil Duffy	
Fitchburg	Nicolas Bosonetto	Paula Caron
Gardner	Trevor Beauregard	Robert Swartz
Groton		Russell Burke
Harvard	Tim Kilhart	Stacia Donahue
Hubbardston	Travis Brown	Alice Livdahl
Lancaster		Roy Mirabito
Leominster	David DiGiovanni	Peter Latchis
Lunenburg	Todd Dwyer	Matthew Brenner
Petersham	Nancy Allen	
Phillipston	Gordon Robertson	
Royalston	Roland Hamel	
Shirley		Janet Tice
Sterling	Richard Maki	Kirsten Newman
Templeton		Charles Carroll II
Townsend	Veronica Kell	Beth Faxon
Westminster		Gregg Buckman
Winchendon	Brian Croteau	Guy Corbosiero

EXOFFICIO MEMBERS

Jeffrey H. McEwen	Office of Transportation Planning (OTP), Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Peter Butler	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Administrator Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Acting Administrator Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Paula Simmons	MassDOT Highway Division - District 2
Arthur Frost	MassDOT Highway Division - District 3 Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
Bruno Fisher	Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART)

ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

Al Futterman	Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA) Amalgamated Transit Union #690 (ATU 690)
Richard Liberatore	Fitchburg Airport Commission
Roy M. Nascimento	North Central MA Chamber of Commerce
Joan Goodwin	Fitchburg Council on Aging
Jessica Strunkin	Mass Development
Peter Lowitt	Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC) Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc.
Joshua Preville	The ARC of Opportunity

MONTACHUSETT METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION SIGNATORIES

Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) Secretary	Jamey L. Tesler
MassDOT Highway Division Administrator	Jonathan L. Gulliver
Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) Chairman	Guy Corbosiero
Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART) Chairman/Mayor City of Fitchburg	Mayor Stephen DiNatale
Mayor City of Gardner	Mayor Michael J. Nicholson
Mayor City of Leominster	Mayor Dean Mazzarella
Winchendon Board of Selectmen <i>Subregion 1</i>	Barbara Anderson
Ashburnham Board of Selectmen <i>Subregion 2</i>	Rosemarie Meissner
Lunenburg Board of Selectmen <i>Subregion 3</i>	Michael-Ray Jeffreys
Lancaster Board of Selectmen <i>Subregion 4</i>	Jason Allison

MPO SUB-SIGNATORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David Mohler, Director OTP, MassDOT, for Secretary Jamey L. Tesler
Arthur Frost, Project Development Engineer for Administrator Jonathan L. Gulliver
Glenn Eaton, Executive Director, MRPC, for Chairman Guy Corbosiero
Bruno Fisher, Administrator, MART, for Chairman Mayor Stephen DiNatale

EXOFFICIO MEMBERS

Jeffrey H. McEwen, Administrator	Federal Highway Administration
Peter Butler, Acting Administrator	Federal Transit Administration

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC) OFFICERS

Guy Corbosiero, Chairman	Winchendon
John Telepciak, Vice Chairman	Phillipston
Laura Shifrin, Treasurer	Townsend
Roger Hoyt, Vice Treasurer	Ashburnham
Shaun Copeland, Secretary	Ayer

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (MJTC) OFFICERS

Nicolas Bosonetto, P.E., Chairman	Fitchburg
Dick Kilhart, Vice Chairman	Athol
Guy Corbosiero, Secretary	Winchendon

MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF

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Holly Ford, Administrative Manager	Blair Haney, Senior Planner
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George Snow, Principal Transportation Planner	Kayla Kress, GIS & IT Analyst
Sheri Bean, Principal Planner	
Brian Doherty, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner	
Karen Chapman, Planning and Development Director	
Jonathan Vos, Regional Planner	
Christopher McDermott, Economic Development Manager	

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to assist the town of Townsend with a Walkability Study for their town center area. Walkability is a measure of how friendly an area is for walking. There are many factors that influence walkability such as the presence of sidewalks or footpaths, roadway and traffic conditions and safety, accessibility for all users, etc. A walkable community not only benefits people by providing increased accessibility for walkers, it also has been known to provide health benefits for its residents, increased social interaction, reduction in crime, an increased sense of pride and volunteerism.

The study areas were developed, which incorporated critical infrastructure locations provided by the town, within the downtown area and included a 1000' buffer around those locations. Data that was collected within the study areas included traffic volumes, sidewalks, a related sign inventory, public parking locations, and from public input.

The residents and business owners were invited to participate in a walking audit where they had the opportunity to walk as a group within the study area and provide their personal experiences and thoughts regarding how walkable they felt the town is. Topic areas included sidewalks, roadways, crosswalks, trails, parks and public gathering spots, shade trees and benches, parking and local attractions. All comments and feedback are provided throughout the document.

Based on the data collected, a recommendations section was included. These recommendations consist of sidewalk upgrades and connections, crosswalk locations and visibility, intersection improvements, additional and improved parking, and roadway reconfiguring.

II. INTRODUCTION

A walkable community is one that allows residents access to major community elements that are generally within a 10-minute walking distance. Those community elements may include shopping centers, town hall, library, post office, and the senior center. The term “Walkability” refers to how friendly an area is to walking. Factors that make a community walkable include street connectivity and design, pedestrian features, access for all roadway users (vehicles, bicyclists and pedestrians), desirable streetscapes, and pedestrian and bicycle safety features. Being a walkable community doesn’t necessarily refer to only transportation features; aspects like socialization and walking for exercise can also play a part.

This report will outline the process of how the town of Townsend was evaluated for walkability as well as providing some recommendations to help boost pedestrian friendliness within the study area. Public parking was also examined to determine if more parking opportunities should be created to accommodate the abundance of points of interest that the town has to offer.

III. STUDY PROCESS

A. Study Area

The study area for this report were determined by the MRPC and the Town of Townsend Planning Department. These areas are located within the Townsend town center area and include key community elements such as town hall, schools, parks/rail trail, religious facilities, post office, shopping, banks, restaurants, fire department, etc. A 1,000-foot buffer was placed around these locations (see Map **Figure 1**). This selected area was broad enough to incorporate all the key locations and have it be realistic for walkers. The main focus included the town center and the Middle/High School area.

B. Walking Audit

Once the study areas were established, the MRPC and the town of Townsend led a walking audit of the town center study area on May 1, 2021 (see flyer and handout in Appendix A). The walking audit was conducted to provide an assessment of walkability within the study area. Participants met at the town hall and walked Main Street, down Route 13 to Railroad Street to the Squannacook River Rail Trail, north on Depot Street to Main Street where participants traveled east until the



sidewalks ended at Workers Credit Union. They traveled back west along Main Street to Brookline Street where they looped around the Townsend Common along Highland and School Street which led back to Main Street.

During the walkability audit participants were asked to observe the following:

- Sidewalks – Are there sidewalks within the study area? Is the width/condition acceptable (at least 4 feet wide)? Do they have handicap access ramps at each crossing and crosswalk? Are there large cracks, bumps, dips, etc. present?
- Roadways – Are the current roadways in good condition? Is speeding a problem? Are large trucks an issue? Are drivers able to see pedestrians in crosswalks – is there adequate sight distance?
- Crosswalks – Are the current crosswalks adequate? Do you feel safe while crossing at the crosswalks? Are vehicles parked closer than 10 feet to the crosswalks? Are there “no parking” zones near crosswalks? Is the striping on the crosswalk visible?
- Trails – Are the trails in the area accessible to the study area? Are there guide signs to help people navigate to those trails and trail parking areas?
- Parks/Public Gathering Spots – Are these located nearby? Are they accessible? Is the number of parks/gathering spots adequate for the area?
- Shade Trees/Benches – Are there sufficient areas to take a rest? Will you be walking in the sun most of the time or are their shaded areas to cool off in the summer?
- Parking – Is there ample parking available within the study area? Are parked cars a problem within the study area? Are their guide signs to show where the parking areas are?
- Attractions – What are the local attractions or key destinations that you walked pasted (ex. library, parks, shops)? Is there a local attraction guide or signs for visitors?

Other questions to consider were:

1. What are the positive aspects of your walking route?
2. Would this walk be adequate for a young child, elderly person, or a disabled person?
3. What would make this area more walkable for all users?
4. What would encourage more walking in the area? What is missing?
5. What are the concerns regarding walking within the study area?
6. Are the neighborhoods in the area considered mixed income? Is there a variety of housing types in the area?
7. Did you see other people out walking within the study area?

After the walking audits were conducted, participants were asked to provide feedback, both positive and negative, based on their walking experiences.

Summary of Findings Based Upon Public Input and Internal Review

The following summarizes a sample of the responses that participants developed regarding the positives and negatives of walkability and parking for the Townsend study areas based on the observation topics mentioned above.

Sidewalks – Overall, most of the major roadways downtown have walkable sidewalks. However, there are some gaps in the sidewalks and there could be improvements made to the following areas that were mentioned during the public outreach walk - add a sidewalk and/or bike lane along Railroad Street from Route 13 to the Squannacook River Rail Trail trailhead and then continuing north along Depot Street that would also include the gas station/mini mart parking lot which currently has a large curb cut. There is also a significant sidewalk gap between McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts along Route 119 and also from Workers Credit Union to the small shopping plaza on Route 119. Any obstructions in existing sidewalk right of way should be removed (ex. trash barrels and telephone poles); inconsistent curbing and sidewalk material along existing sidewalks was also mentioned as problematic as well as creating more accessible ramps along future and existing sidewalk crossings.



Railroad Street



Depot St. at Mini Mart



Main Street



Highland Street



School Street



Main Street



Main St at McDonalds



Main St

Roadways –There were not many areas of concern regarding pavement condition, but heavy traffic, including trucks, and speeding was mentioned along Route 119 and Route 13. Traffic calming measures should be considered in these areas to reduce the vehicular speeds and improve safety along these roadways. One area in particular would be along Route 119 at the High School where students are known to walk across Route 119 to the plaza and restaurants.

It was also mentioned that there are a few areas that have large curb cuts and have a lot of wide-open space along the roadways. These locations are typically along intersections and shopping plazas. Some examples include the Mobile Mart at the corner of Route 119/Depot Street, the intersection of Brookline Street/Route 119, Turnpike Rd/Route 119, Brookline St/Highland St, the wide roadway/parking area across from Cliff’s Café, and the town common parking area. Narrowing entrance/exit points creates less conflict areas and increases pedestrian safety.



Rt. 119 & Brookline Street



Depot Street at Mobile Mart



Brookline St & Highland St

Crosswalks –The crosswalks within the study area were mostly in good condition although a few were faded and not visible at night. There is also a lack of streetlights, in some locations, which makes crossing at night more difficult. There were crosswalks that did not connect to sidewalks and/or were not ADA accessible such as along Main Street near Brookline Street. Bump outs were recommended along Route 119 to make pedestrians more visible and to slow vehicles down. A new crosswalk was also suggested on Route 13 to Railroad Street and Route 119 at Workers Credit Union where the sidewalk ends to the shopping plaza across the street. A lack of signage for crossings and crosswalks at road crossings along Main Street in the town center was also noted.



Rt. 119 at Workers Credit Union



Rt. 13 at Railroad Street



Main Street



Highland St

Trails – Probably the most notable trail in the study area would be the Squannacook River Rail Trail that will run from Townsend to Groton. This trail has potential to be a transportation route as it connects to many places of interest. There are also some additional trails in the area that tend to be more for recreation. These trails include Howard Park and Old Meetinghouse Park. Proper signage and wayfinding are also desirable for all of these locations.



Old Meetinghouse Park



Howard Park



Squannacook River Rail Trail – trail head

Parks/Public Gathering Spots – the most popular park/gathering spot that was mentioned during the public outreach session was the Townsend Common located right in the town center. This location has a large parking area, walking paths, benches, shade trees and gazebo, which were noted as important to the residents. The town concerts are also held here throughout the summer months. There is also the Upper Common Park which is located on the study area boundary at the intersection of Main Street and Turnpike Road and includes benches and monuments.



Townsend Common



Upper Common Park

Shade Trees/Benches – There are shade trees throughout the town center, although there were people who felt that more trees along Main Street were needed. Benches are located at the Town Common, Town Hall and a few local businesses along Route 119. There were less shade trees and benches in the area of the High School.



Townsend Pizza - Main Street



Town Hall



Town Common

Parking – There are multiple municipal parking lots throughout the study area that include the Town Common, Squannacook River Rail Trail, and a, not very well-known, lot on Jeff Street. The unofficial parking area across from Cliff’s Café is challenging for traffic and pedestrians as it is located along the roadway and can get very congested on weekend mornings. Signage for municipal parking areas would be helpful as well as painting parking spaces in the existing lots to accommodate more vehicles.



Town Common Parking



Rail Trail Parking



Main St near Cliff's Café



Jeff Street Parking

Attractions – Townsend has an abundance of attractions within the study area including the Squannacook River Rail Trail, restaurants, shopping plazas, and the Town Common. Most of these locations are fairly walkable with the exception of an occasional missing sidewalk link, crosswalk, ramp, etc.

There are some walkability connections that should be considered where people could walk from one attraction to another with ease. Some examples of these locations would be to connect the town center to the Squannacook River Rail Trail, have the Town Common be accessible from all sides, and continue the sidewalk further west from the High School so that the Dunkin Donuts is connected.



Evans on the Common



Harbor Village Mall

C. Data Collection

1. Traffic Volume Data

The following traffic volumes were conducted as part of the MRPC’s yearly count program or from statewide data provided by MassDOT. This data is calculated for 2020 or 2021 using average growth factors that can be found on the MassDOT MS2 website - <https://mhd.ms2soft.com/tcds/tsearch.asp?loc=Mhd&mod=> . Please see Map Figure 3 for more detailed location information.

Study Area Traffic Volumes

Location	Average Traffic Volume based on Growth Factors (Vehicles per Day)
Elm Street south of Main Street	7,378
Main Street west of School Street	7,792
Main Street west of Turnpike Road	7,470
Main Street east of Turnpike Road	10,140
School Street north of Main Street	4,887
Turnpike Road north of Main Street	1,519

Although there are not a lot of traffic count locations throughout the study area, traffic volumes appear to be highest along the town center/Route 119 area which averages 7,000-10,000 vehicles per day.

2. Crash History

The MRPC collected accident data from MassDOT for the years of 2018-2021. All recorded crashes in the study area were mapped in Map Figure 4. For the town of Townsend there were 438 total crashes recorded within the community and 178 (41%) of those occurred within the study area. Of those reported crashes within the study area, zero were reported as fatal injury crashes, 50 were non-fatal injury crashes, 125 were considered property damage only and three were not reported.

Map Figure 4 shows that most crashes occur along the Route 119 corridor, specifically at the intersection of Route 13, Brookline Street, South Street, the area of Haffner's Gas Station and Sterilite Corporation, and in the area of the High School and Shopping Plaza. A few other areas with high crashes outside of Route 119 include the intersection of Route 13 & Depot Street, Route 13 & Railroad Street, and the Brookline Street/Highland Street area.

3. Inventory of Road Facilities

This inventory incorporated all roadways (local streets, collectors, arterials, and highways) and any pedestrian-related infrastructure that may exist. Data that was collected included sidewalks, crosswalks, and signage. (See Map Figures 2 & 5)

Sidewalks are probably one of the most important aspects of a walkable community. In most downtown areas, simply walking along the side of the road with traffic is far too dangerous for most pedestrians. Since the average daily traffic through downtown Townsend is 7,000-10,000, it is imperative that sidewalks exist and are in good condition to accommodate pedestrians of all ages and abilities.

There are many miles of sidewalk within the study areas and a majority of those are in good condition. Sidewalks are needed along side streets that would connect to Route 119 and Route 13 as well as in the vicinity of the school and shopping plaza.

D. Recommendations

When streets and town centers are designed only for cars, they become barriers for pedestrians of all abilities, who cannot get from point A to point B safely. As a result, many people end up in their cars, missing out on opportunities for much needed fresh air, socialization, and physical activity.

Based upon the data collected and the analysis conducted, the following recommendations were developed: (Numbered recommendations are in no particular order and can be referenced as examples on map **Figure 6**)

1. Infrastructure Improvements

Sidewalks

- Repair all damaged, cracked, chipped and uneven portions of the existing sidewalks.
- Continue the sidewalk up Route 119 from the McDonalds to Dunkin Donuts. (#1).
- Add sidewalks and/or bike lanes along Railroad Street (#2)
- Add sidewalks and/or bike lanes along Depot Street from the Rail Trail parking area to Main Street (#3).
- Add sidewalk along Highland Street from Brookline Street to the Common parking area (#4).
- Keep sidewalk material consistent.
- Keep sidewalks clear of impediments.
- Mandate sidewalks and/or bicycle lanes in all developments where appropriate.
- Provide and maintain pedestrian lighting.

Crosswalks

- Consider additional crosswalk on Route 13 to Railroad Street (#5)
- Consider additional crosswalk on Route 119 near Workers Credit Union to the shopping plaza. (#6)
- Consider traffic calming techniques such as road narrowing or adding bump outs at major crosswalk locations along Main Street/Rt. 119.
- Place “No Parking” signs for areas within 10 feet of a crosswalk or driveway.
- Keep crosswalk striping bright, consistent, and visible year-round.
- Place crosswalks that connect to sidewalks and have ADA accessible ramps.
- Add advanced warning signs or flashing signs at high traffic areas.

Roadways

- Conduct a traffic study at the intersection of Highland Street & Brookline Street (#7).
- Consider bike lanes or sharrows whenever possible.
- Consider traffic calming measures along Route 119, near the High School and town center, to reduce vehicular speeds and improve safety.
- Tighten up any unnecessarily long curb cuts to channel vehicles entering and exiting local businesses and shopping plazas in order to reduce pedestrian/vehicle conflicts. Some examples of this would include the gas station at Main Street & Depot Street (#8), Main Street & Osgood Street (#9), Main Street & Brookline Street/Honey Farms (#10), Highland Street & Brookline Street (#7), and Main Street at Turnpike Road (#11).
- Warning signs should continue to be placed and maintained in the school area to warn all drivers of pedestrians, cyclists, and children. Placement of all regulatory and guidance signs should conform to guidelines established by Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) – Highway Division and the “Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices” (MUTCD).

Other

- Add striping and signage for public parking areas.
- Consider adding benches in the are of the High School & shopping plaza.
- Continue to work towards Complete Streets efforts by following the Townsend Complete Streets Policy that was developed in 2020. This policy helped create the Complete Streets Prioritization Plan in 2021 and is a great resource in applying for Complete Streets funding or municipal project development using other funding sources.
- Continue to grow the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program that has been established at both the Elementary School and Middle School. This program works to increase safe biking and walking among elementary and middle school students by using a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation. SRTS utilizes the six E's to implement its program- Education, Encouragement, Enforcement, Evaluation, Engineering, and Equity.
- Continue the efforts from the recently awarded Shared Streets and Spaces funding program.
- Continue to work towards an update to the existing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan that was established in 2003. This plan is a formal document available to the public outlining a community's compliance with ADA. A typical transition plan table of contents includes:
 1. **Introduction/Executive Summary:** Background on need and purpose, relationship to other laws and a general outcome of self-evaluation.
 2. **ADA Program Coordination:** Listing one or more designated persons responsible for coordinating ADA compliance. This person or persons is responsible to serve staff and the public with knowledge and background to address questions and issues regarding ADA.
 3. **ADA Public Notice:** Statement on the city's understanding of their responsibility for employment, communications, policy, and modifications to policies and procedures.
 4. **Grievance Procedure:** A written and published procedure with contact information on how a resident can make a complaint or grievance of discrimination on the basis of a disability.
 5. **Public Involvement:** The procedure on how the city reaches out to the disabled public on accessibility challenges and priorities.
 6. **Self-Evaluation:** Detail of existing barriers to city communications, programs and services, streets and intersections, and buildings and outdoor areas.
 7. **Implementation Program:** The city's methods and schedule on barrier removals. This section can include costs for the work.

IV. NEXT STEPS

A. Project Development

Project Development is the process that takes a transportation improvement from concept through construction. Every year the region receives federal and state funds for projects to improve the transportation network in local communities. These funds and projects are prioritized through the MMPO, a regional advisory group that annually develops the Montachusett Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). For a community to receive funds, the project must follow a multi-step review and approval process required by the MassDOT Highway Division. This process is summarized in Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) No. HED-08-02-1-00 Project Initiation Process for Highway Division Projects. A copy of this SOP is provided in **Appendix B** of this report.

Project proponents are required to follow this process whenever MassDOT Highway Division is involved in the decision-making process. The project development procedures are, therefore, applicable to any of the following situations:

- When MassDOT is the proponent; or
- When MassDOT is responsible for project funding (state or federal-aid projects); or
- When MassDOT controls the infrastructure (projects on state highways).

Projects with local jurisdiction and local funding sources are not required to go through this review process unless the project is located on the National Highway or Federal-Aid Systems. The project development process is designed to progressively narrow the projects focus in order to develop a project that addresses identified needs at that location. There should be opportunities for public participation throughout.

The steps described in the SOP are also available online at: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/standard-operating-procedure-project-initiation-process-for-highway-division-projects/download>

B. Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MMPO)

All urbanized areas with a population greater than 50,000 are required by the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal regulations to designate an MPO for the area. The establishment of an MPO is necessary for the State to receive Federal transportation funds. In the Montachusett Region, the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) serves as staff for the MPO. The MRPC staff annually produces a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). In addition, a Regional Transportation Plan is updated periodically to reflect the changing transportation needs of the area. A 2020 Regional Transportation Plan was prepared and endorsed by the MPO on July 17, 2019.

The MPO in the Montachusett Region (after reorganization in October 2001) is currently comprised of the following signatories:

- Secretary and CEO of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT);
- Administrator of MassDOT Highway Division;
- Chairman of the MRPC;
- Chairman of Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART)*;
- Mayor of the City of Fitchburg
- Mayor of the City of Gardner
- Mayor of the City of Leominster
- Four Representatives from the four identified Subregions of towns in the MRPC region

*This member will be represented by one of the Mayors from Fitchburg, Gardner or Leominster.

The MMPO Subregions are composed as such:

- Subregion 1 - Athol, Hubbardston, Petersham, Phillipston, Royalston, Templeton, Winchendon;
- Subregion 2 - Ashburnham, Ashby, Groton, Townsend, Westminster;
- Subregion 3 - Ayer, Harvard, Lunenburg and Shirley;
- Subregion 4 - Clinton, Lancaster, Sterling.

These 10 members serve as the MPO Policy Board for the regional "3C" (comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing) transportation planning process.

C. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – Development and Process

The TIP is a prioritized listing of transportation projects proposed for implementation during the future four federal fiscal years and is updated every year by the MMPO. TIP projects are identified by funding category so that where necessary priorities may be established for projects within each funding program. Unless otherwise noted, the agency responsible for implementing highway projects is the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Highway Division and, for transit projects, the Montachusett Regional Transit Authority.

MRPC staff annually develops the TIP project listing from sources that include the MassDOT's Project Information System, MassDOT Highway Division Districts 2 and 3, local officials, the Montachusett Joint Transportation Committee (MJTC), the Long and Short Range Elements of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and the Montachusett Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Prioritization of projects is based upon input from MassDOT regarding project design and implementation status, local prioritization from chief elected officials, scoring of the project based upon the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC), fiscal constraints for the Montachusett Region, consensus vote by the MJTC and formal adoption by the MPO. Throughout this procedure, input from local citizens are reviewed and considered where appropriate in the prioritization process.

An initial project listing is obtained from MassDOT and the local communities. These projects are then reviewed one by one to ascertain their current status as to design and potential advertising dates. Projects are then scored and evaluated utilizing the Transportation Evaluation Criteria (TEC) developed by the MassDOT. The TEC is a series of criteria to “be applied by the appropriate implementing agency during the project development stage to ensure that our limited budgetary and staff resources are committed to the best proposals; to assist the MPO process of programming federal funding through the regional Transportation Improvement Programs; and to examine existing projects in the pipeline to determine which should ultimately proceed to design and construction.” Final scores based upon the TEC then become part of the decision and prioritization process.

From this information, a project listing by fiscal year is developed. This fiscal listing is then compared to the Federal funding target allocation for the region. The listing is then reviewed by state and local officials, as well as the MJTC and the MMPO, to determine fiscal constraint by funding year. Any problems are then identified. Through the MMPO, projects are adjusted and prioritized in order to resolve the identified problems.

In conformance established procedures with the MMPO Public Participation Program (PPP), developed to ensure a "proactive public involvement process ... in developing plans and TIPs, the draft TIP is distributed for a federally mandated 21-day public review and comment period. Following completion of the 21-day review period, any comments or issues received are addressed and reflected in the final TIP. This document is then reviewed by the MJTC, MRPC and MMPO and is recommended for endorsement by the MMPO at a subsequent MMPO meeting.

The fully endorsed TIP is then distributed to Federal, State and local agencies and groups, including FTA, FHWA, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) again in conformance with the PPP.

At any time during the Federal Fiscal Year, an amendment to the TIP can be developed and endorsed by the MMPO following similar procedures established for the TIP, i.e., a draft amendment is prepared and released for a 21-day public review and comment period, reviewed by the MJTC, MRPC and the MMPO and endorsed if deemed appropriate.

D. Funding Programs

Several funding sources exist on the federal and state level that may be applicable to the preferred projects identified by the communities within this report. As the municipality begins the project development process, the following funding sources/options may come into play during the design, implementation, and construction phases. The community should note that a funding program need not be identified as part of the PNF or PIF process but can be determined as the project limits and scope become defined.

The following is a brief listing of Federal, State and Local funding programs that may be potential sources for road, bridge, trail, and sidewalk projects. Information is based upon the

recent federal surface transportation funding legislation known as Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. This legislation has created a more streamlined, performance-based and multimodal program to address the challenges facing the country's transportation system. For further information on some of these programs please contact the MRPC or MassDOT Highway Division. Additional information on the FAST Act can be found at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) website, www.fhwa.dot.gov/fastact/

The FAST Act

On December 4, 2015, President Obama signed the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) into law—the first federal law in over a decade to provide long-term funding certainty for surface transportation infrastructure planning and investment. The FAST Act authorizes \$305 billion over fiscal years 2016 through 2020 for highway, highway and motor vehicle safety, public transportation, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety, rail, and research, technology, and statistics programs. The FAST Act maintains our focus on safety, keeps intact the established structure of the various highway-related programs we manage, continues efforts to streamline project delivery and, for the first time, provides a dedicated source of federal dollars for freight projects. With the enactment of the FAST Act, states and local governments are now moving forward with critical transportation projects with the confidence that they will have a federal partner over the long term. The following FAST Act programs may be applicable to securing funding for improvements.

Federal Programs:

- *National Highway Performance Program (NHPP)* - The enhanced National Highway System (NHS) is composed of approximately 220,000 miles of rural and urban roads serving major population centers, international border crossings, intermodal transportation facilities, and major travel destinations. It includes the Interstate System, all principal arterials (including some not previously designated as part of the NHS) and border crossings on those routes, highways that provide motor vehicle access between the NHS and major intermodal transportation facilities, and the network of highways important to U.S. strategic defense (STRAHNET) and its connectors to major military installations.
- *Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)* - The FAST Act converts the long-standing Surface Transportation Program into the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, acknowledging that this program has the most flexible eligibilities among all Federal-aid highway programs and aligning the program's name with how FHWA has historically administered it. The FAST Act provides an estimated annual average of \$11.7 billion for STBG, which States and localities may use for projects to preserve or improve conditions and performance on any Federal-aid highway, bridge projects on any public road, facilities for nonmotorized transportation, transit capital projects, and public bus terminals and facilities.

- ***Railway-Highway Crossings Program*** - The FAST Act continues the Railway-Highway Crossings Program, providing funds for safety improvements to reduce the number of fatalities, injuries, and crashes at public railway-highway grade crossings.
- ***Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ)*** - The CMAQ program provides a flexible funding source to State and local governments for transportation projects and programs to help meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act. Funding is available to reduce congestion and improve air quality for areas that do not meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone, carbon monoxide, or particulate matter (nonattainment areas) as well as former nonattainment areas that are now in compliance (maintenance areas). States with no nonattainment or maintenance areas may use their CMAQ funds for any CMAQ- or STP-eligible project.
- ***Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP)*** - The HSIP emphasizes a data-driven, strategic approach to improving highway safety on all public roads that focuses on performance. The foundation for this approach is a safety data system, which each State is required to have to identify key safety problems, establish their relative severity, and then adopt strategic and performance-based goals to maximize safety. Every State is required to develop a Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) that lays out strategies to address these key safety problems.
- ***Transportation Alternatives (TA)*** - The FAST Act eliminates the MAP-21 Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) and replaces it with a set-aside of STBG funding for transportation alternatives. These set-aside funds include all projects and activities that were previously eligible under TAP, encompassing a variety of smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, recreational trails, safe routes to school projects, community improvements such as historic preservation and vegetation management, and environmental mitigation related to stormwater and habitat connectivity. Eligible activities include:
 - Transportation alternatives (new definition incorporates many transportation enhancement activities and several new activities)
 - Recreational trails program (program remains unchanged)
 - Safe routes to schools program
 - Planning, designing, or constructing roadways within the right-of way of former Interstate routes or other divided highways.

State Programs:

- ***MassWorks Infrastructure Grants*** - The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is a competitive grant program that provides the largest and most flexible source of capital funds to municipalities and other eligible public entities for public infrastructure projects

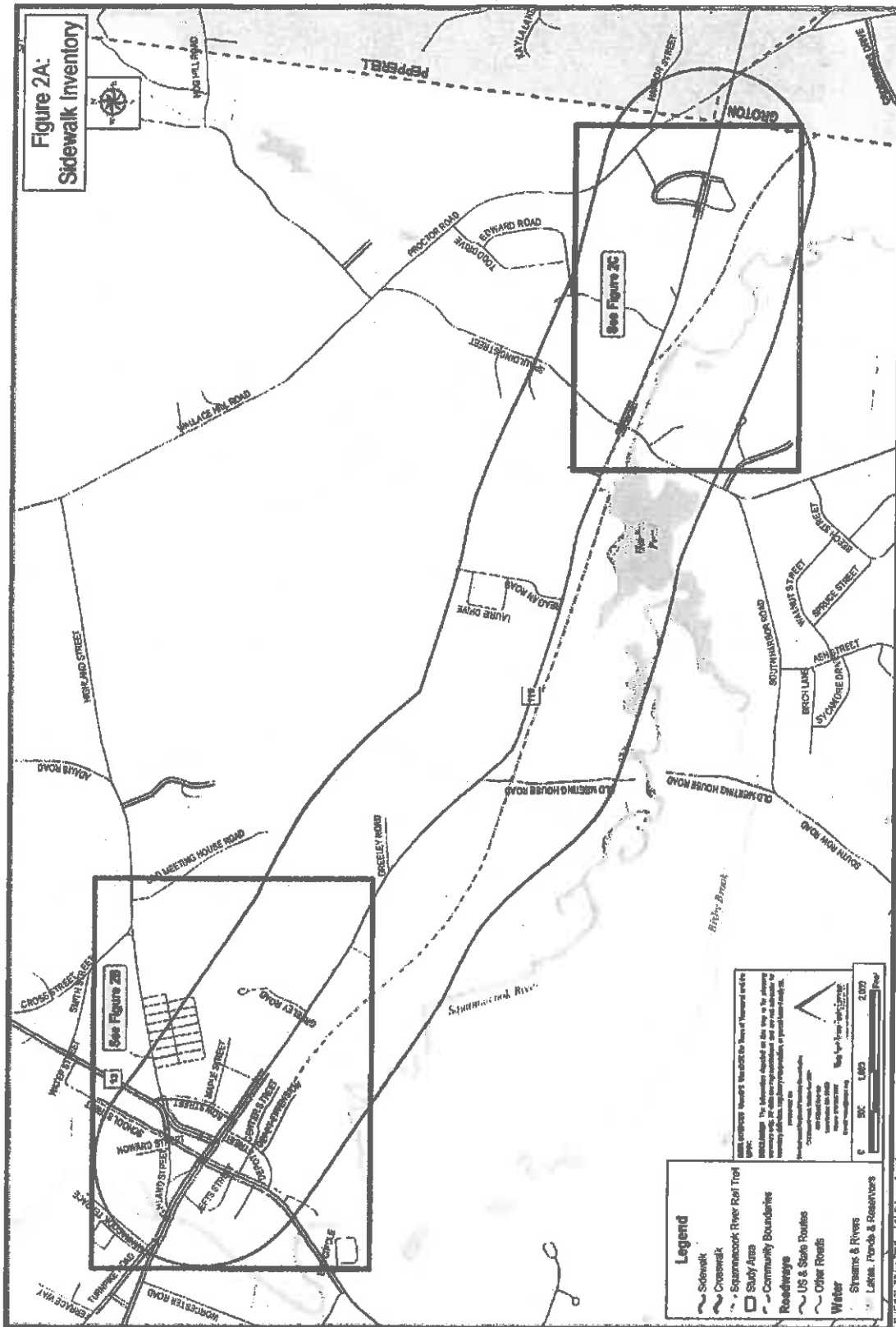
that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

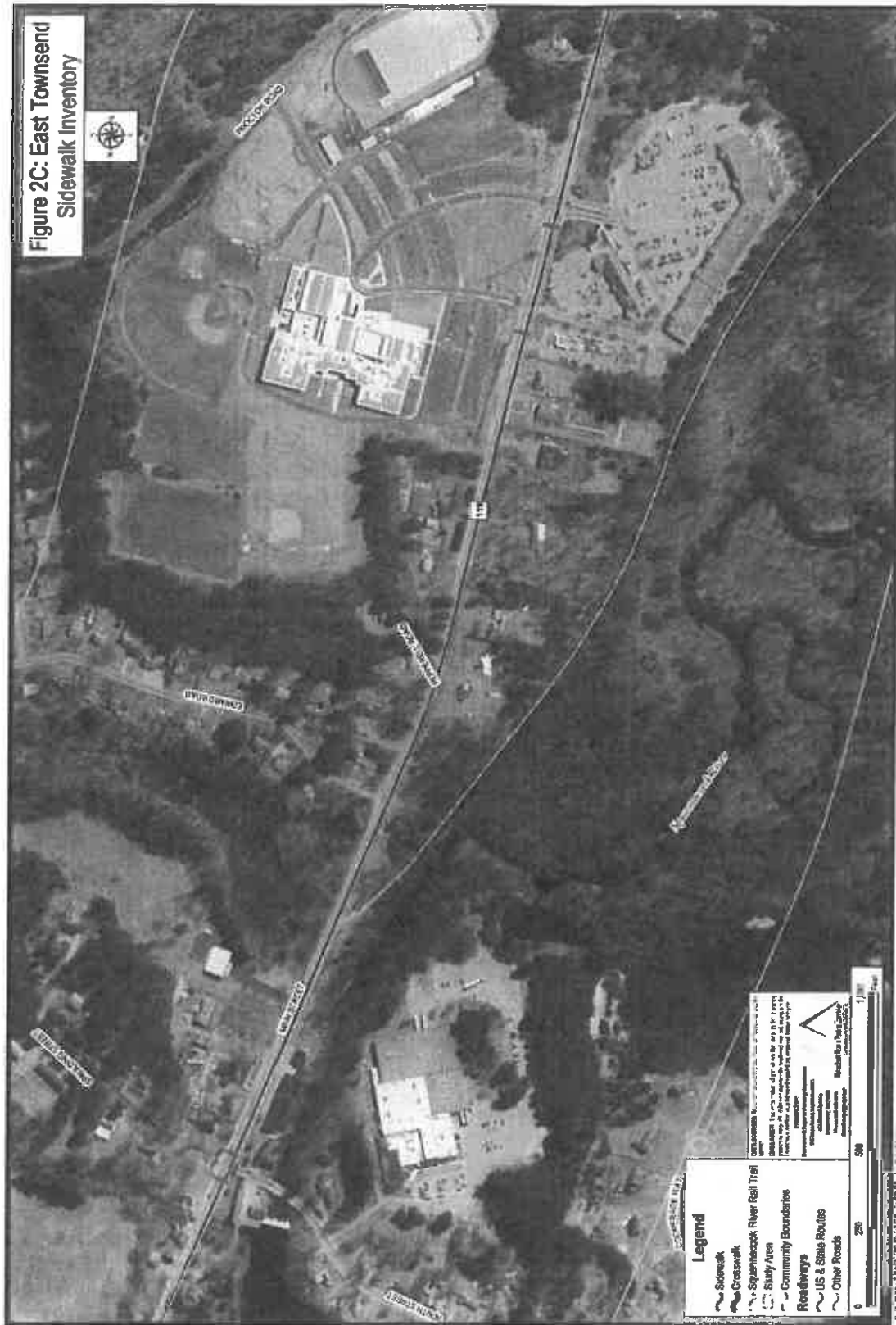
- *Municipal Bridge Program* - MassDOT manages and funds rehabilitation and replacement of municipally owned bridges, and as of 2016 has allocated \$50 million in general obligation bonds for municipal structures over the next five years.
- *Complete Streets Program* - MassDOT provides funding to cities and towns for the completion of “Complete Streets” plans, which could include provisions for freight loading areas in business districts.
- *Safe Routes to School Program* - This program is sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and works to increase safe biking and walking among elementary and middle school students by using a collaborative, community-focused approach that bridges the gap between health and transportation.
- *Shared Streets & Spaces Program*- This program was established to support municipalities and transit authorities to improve plazas, sidewalks, curbs, streets, bus stops, parking areas, and other public spaces in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce. The newest phase of this program will have an additional emphasis on safety and is looking to fund projects that improve safety for all road users through interventions that achieve safer conditions and safer speeds.

Local Sources:

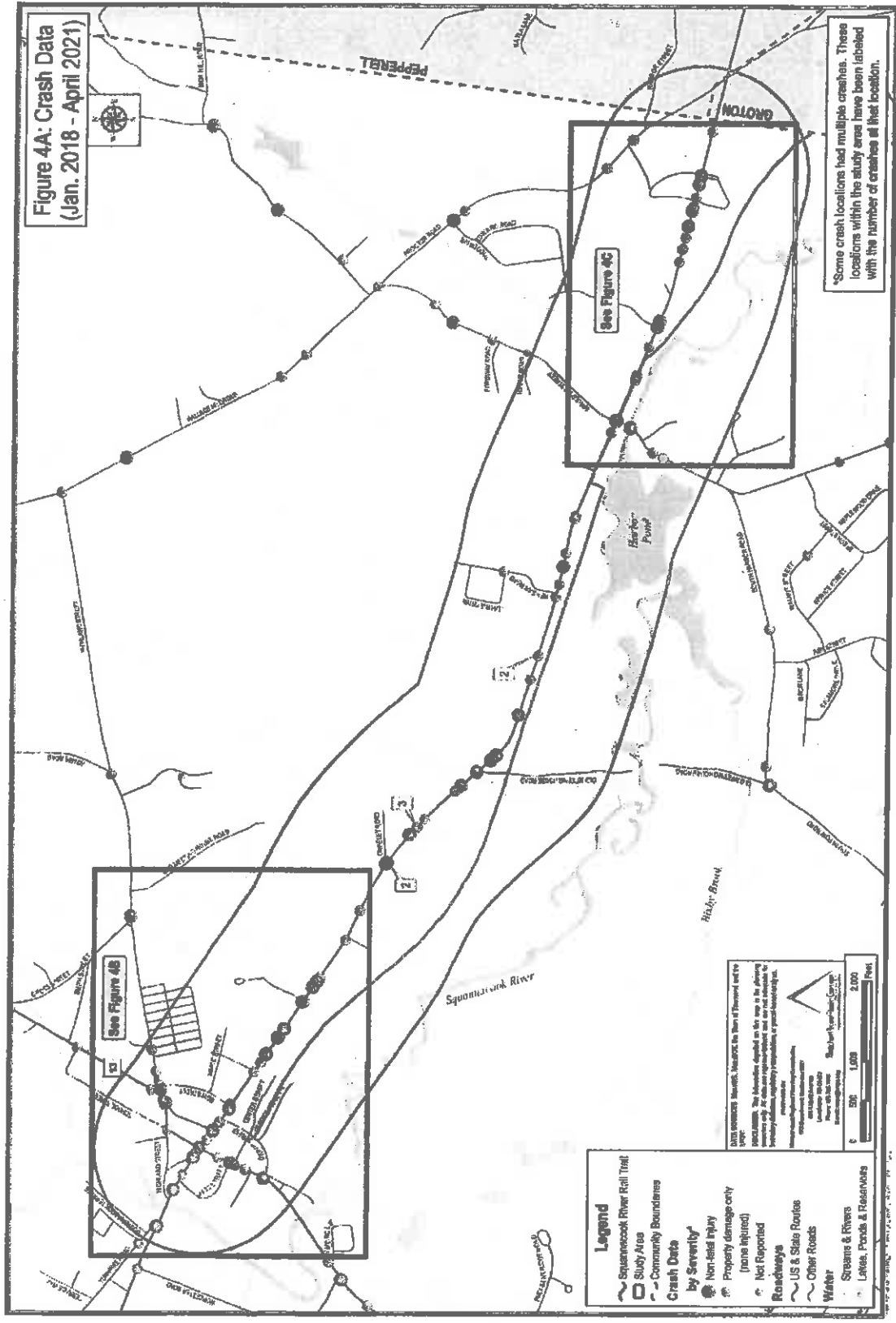
- *Chapter 90 Transportation Funds* -The Chapter 90 Program entitles municipalities to reimbursement of documented expenditures for Capital Improvement Projects for Highway Construction, Preservation and Improvement Projects that create or extend the life of Capital Facilities under the provisions of General Laws Chapter 90, Section 34, Clause 2(a) on approved Projects. Eligible Highway Construction projects include resurfacing, micro surfacing, pug mill mix (cold mix), drainage, intersections, sidewalks, footbridges, berms and curbs, traffic controls and related facilities, right-of-way acquisition, street lighting (excluding operating costs and decorative enhancements), bridges, and tree planting/landscaping in association with a project.

MAP FIGURES







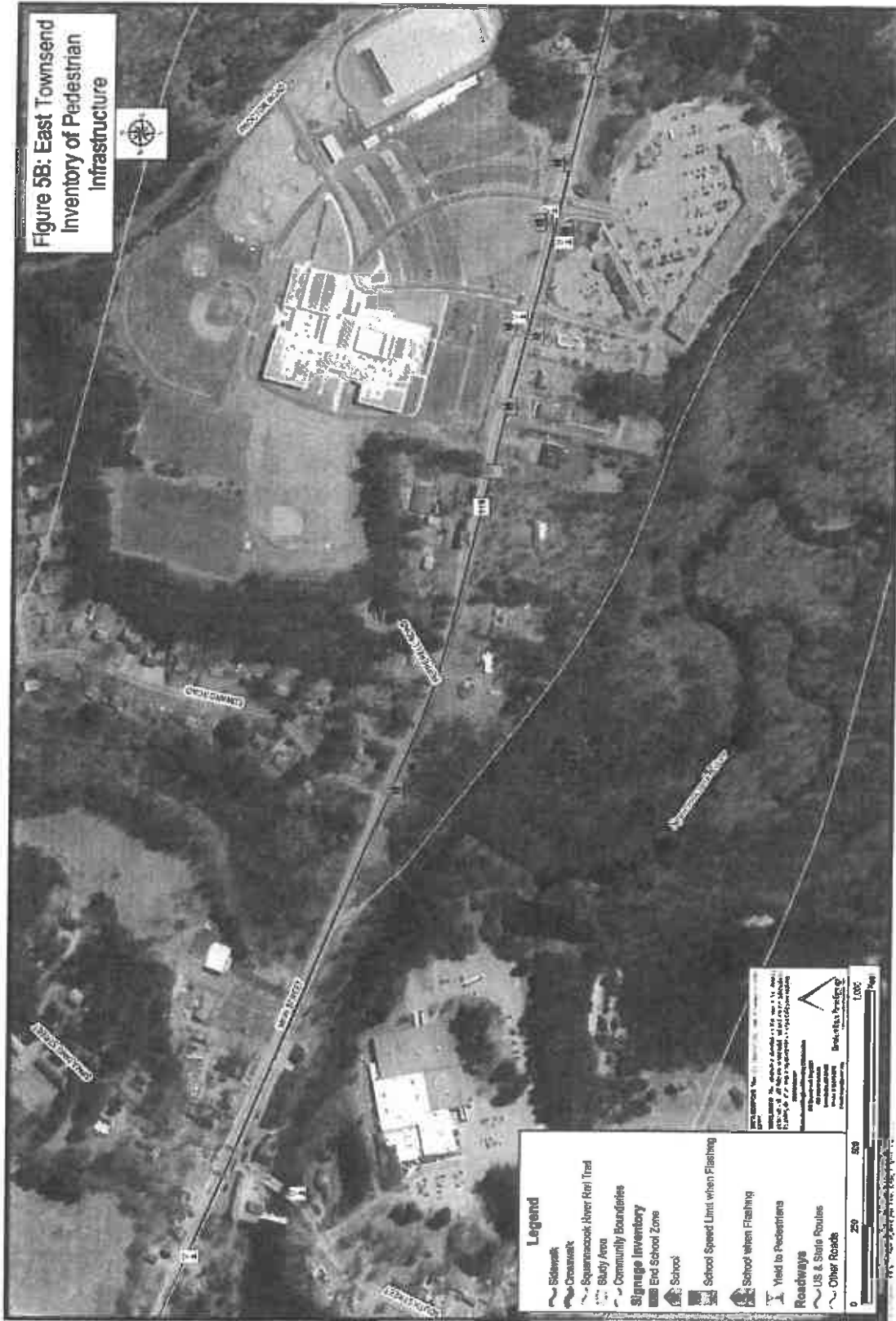


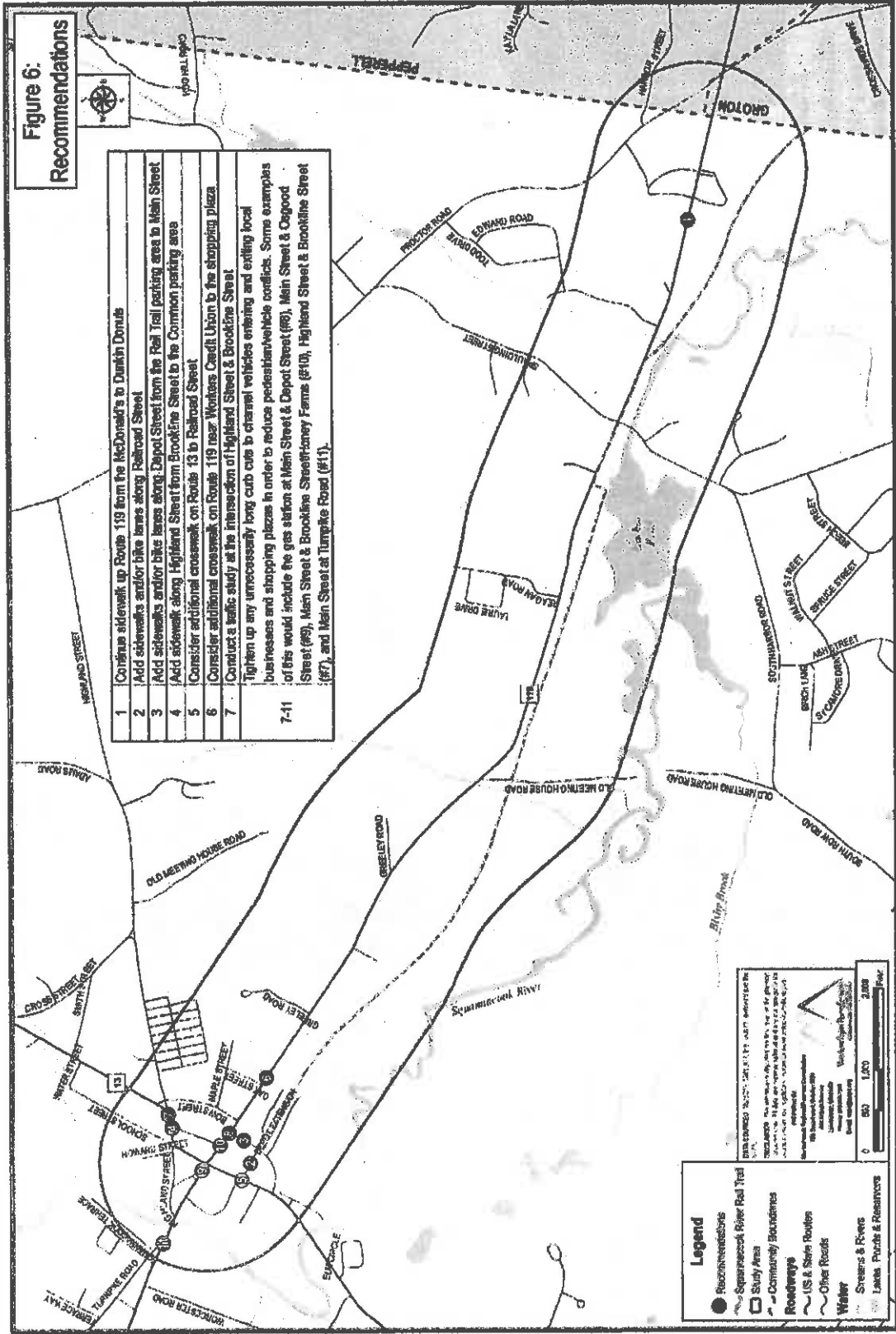






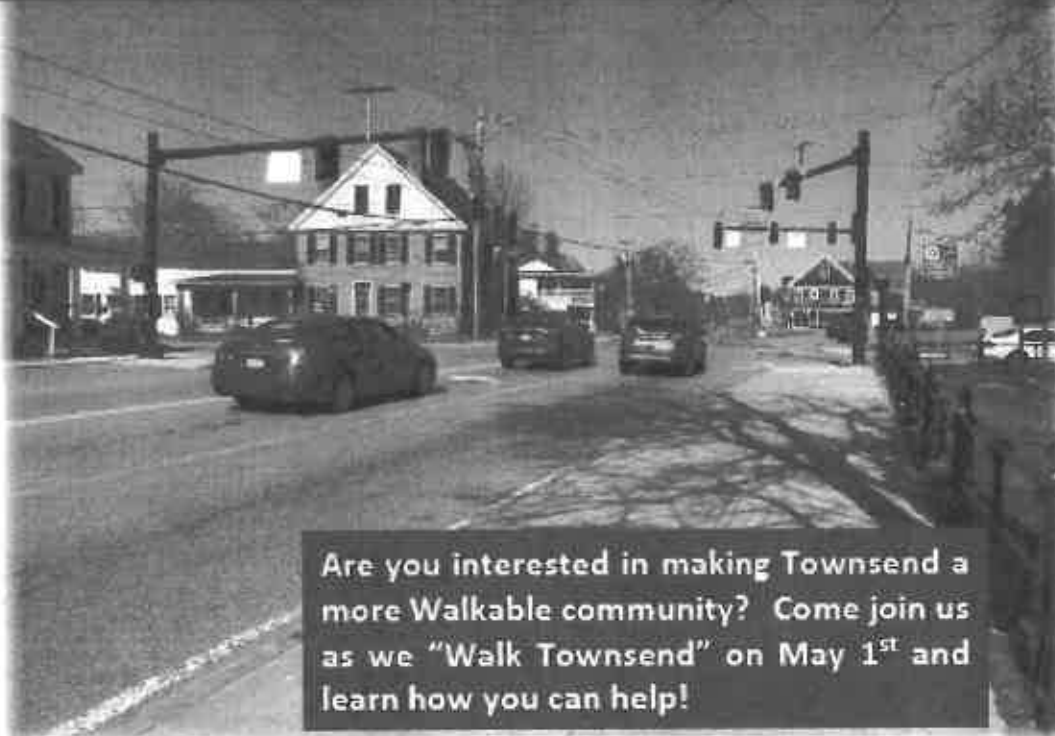
**Figure 5B: East Townsend
Inventory of Pedestrian
Infrastructure**





APPENDIX A – Walking Audit Flyer and Handout

WALK TOWNSEND!



Are you interested in making Townsend a more Walkable community? Come join us as we "Walk Townsend" on May 1st and learn how you can help!

When: MAY 1, 10:00 AM (Rain Date 5/2) Where: TOWNSEND TOWN HALL

By walking the streets of downtown Townsend, we can identify positive and negative aspects affecting pedestrian travel and prioritizing specific solutions that will increase safety and accessibility for pedestrians. Potential solutions could include addressing missing sidewalk links, intersections, crosswalks, signage and traffic calming. Come let us know how Townsend can be more pedestrian friendly!

****Masks and social distancing will be required****

Agenda

10:00 - 10:15 – Introduction & project overview

10:15 - 11:15 – Walking audit

11:15 - 11:45 – Review findings, come up with possible solutions, wrap up

All Townsend residents, business owners, public officials, young & old! All are welcome!



Montachusett Regional Planning Commission

What to look for while conducting a Walkability Audit:

Sidewalks – Are there sidewalks within the study area? Is the width/condition acceptable (at least 4 feet wide)? Do they have handicap access ramps at each crossing & crosswalk? Are there large cracks, bumps, dips, etc. present?

Roadways – Are the current roadways in good condition? Is speeding a problem? Are large trucks an issue? Are drivers able to see pedestrians in crosswalks – is there adequate sight distance?

Crosswalks – Are the current crosswalks adequate? Do you feel safe while crossing at the crosswalks? Are vehicles parked closer than 10 feet to the crosswalks? Are there no parking zones near crosswalks? Is the striping on the crosswalk visible?

Trails – Are the trails in the area accessible to the study area? Are there guide signs to help people navigate to those trails & trail parking areas?

Parks/Public Gathering spots – Are these located nearby? Are they accessible? Is the number of parks/gathering spots adequate for the area?

Shade Trees/Benches – Are there sufficient areas to take a rest? Will you be walking in the sun most of the time or are there shaded areas to cool off in the summer?

Parking – Is there ample parking available within the study area? Are parked cars a problem within the study area? Are their guide signs to show where the parking areas are?

Attractions – What are the local attractions or key destinations that you walked by? (ex. library, parks, shops) Is there a local attraction guide or signs for visitors?

Other questions to consider-

1. What are the positive aspects of your walking route?
2. Would this walk be adequate for a young child, elderly person, or a disabled person?
3. What would make this area more walkable for all users?
4. What would encourage more walking in the area? What's missing?
5. What are the concerns regarding walking within the study area?
6. Are the neighborhoods in the area considered mixed income? Is there a variety of housing types in the area?
7. Did you see other people out walking within the study area?

APPENDIX B – MassDOT Standard Operating Procedures: Project Initiation Process for Highway Division Projects, HED-08-02-1-000

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Purpose and Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) summarizes the activities associated with initiating a project at the MassDOT Highway Division, from definition of project need through approval by the Project Review Committee (PRC). This SOP is designed to be consistent with the first three steps of the project development process as described in Chapter 2 of the Project Development and Design Guide (Sections 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, pages 2-5 through 2-33):

Step 1: Problem/Need/Opportunity Identification

Step 2: Planning

Step 3: Project Initiation

This SOP applies to all projects, that is, activities that may result in the initial construction, maintenance, preservation, rehabilitation, or reconstruction of infrastructure or other facilities. It also applies to vertical construction projects. It is not intended to apply to activities such as maintenance equipment purchases or other procurements.

Definitions and Resources

MaPIT: All projects must be initiated through the Massachusetts Project Intake Tool (MaPIT), a web-based application designed to help both state and municipal proponents map, create, and initiate transportation projects, while screening against all relevant in-house GIS resources. The website is accessible at this address: <https://gis.massdot.state.ma.us/mapit/>

A username and password are required to use the website. Log in credentials are provided to designated staff at MassDOT or other state agencies, official staff representing each city or town, and consulting firm personnel working on behalf of a city or town. Eligible staff includes those in charge of creating new projects within MassDOT or within municipalities. Training sessions are held periodically by the MassDOT Highway Division and training videos should be made available on mass.gov at the following address: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massdot-highway-initiating-a-project>

Project Initiation Form (PIF): The new PIF combines the superseded forms that were previously used during project initiation, the Project Need Form (PNF) and old PIF. The PIF is divided into three parts:

- Part I – Facility Location, Project Purpose and Need, and General Information
- Part II – Project Description
- Part III – Project Costs and Responsibilities

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Project Scoring: The MaPIT application uses the information provided from the PIF to establish an overall score based on a set of criteria related to system preservation, mobility, safety, economic impacts, environmental effects, social equity, policy support, and cost effectiveness. The criteria and project score are used by MassDOT staff to assess the relative value of each proposed project and to help allocate limited state and federal funds to transportation assets.

Project Scoping Checklist: The MassDOT Highway Division has created separate project scoping checklists for roadway and bridge projects to ensure that the design services include all necessary work tasks for successful completion of the project's design. The checklist is completed after project creation and includes information derived from MaPIT and the PIF.

Pre-25% Design Scoping Procedure: The MassDOT Highway Division has created a Pre-25% Project Scoping Procedure to refine the scope of a project and establish a basis for the 25% design submission. It is intended to help build consensus on design approach, design elements such as cross-section and design speed, and identify potential project risks.

Project Proponents

A MassDOT Highway project may be initiated by three general types of users: MassDOT Highway Division staff; another state agency staff, such as the Department of Conservation and Recreation; and official staff of a city or town in Massachusetts or their designated representative.

MassDOT Highway Division Project Types

The project types initiated by MassDOT Highway Division Headquarters staff generally originate from the asset management systems operated by the Division to ensure proper maintenance and repair of the Commonwealth's roadway assets or address a known issue. Highway Division proponents are typically managers of a specific class of infrastructure asset (e.g. bridges, pavement, etc.), a policy focus area (safety, traffic, etc.), or general funding programs (interstate maintenance, NHS preservation, etc.).

Project types initiated by MassDOT Highway Division District staff generally originate from a specific need that is required to ensure proper maintenance and repair of the Commonwealth's roadway assets or address a known issue. These needs can be from any policy focus area and cover the full breadth of transportation projects, including but not limited to: safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, streetscape improvements, roadway repair and/or repaving, construction of new roadways, and interstate ramp modifications. To ensure proper accountability with internally initiated projects, District staff must coordinate with the responsible program or asset manager(s) prior to initiating a project.

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Non-MassDOT State Agency Project Types

The project types initiated by staff of other state agencies other than MassDOT vary but are limited only to those that require use of state or federal funds for maintenance, repair, and/or modification of roadway infrastructure under the jurisdiction of that agency.

Municipal Project Types

The project types initiated for municipalities consist of a wide variety, covering the full breadth of transportation projects, including but not limited to: safety improvements, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, streetscape improvements, roadway repair and/or repaving, construction of new roadways, traffic signal upgrades, and intersection reconstruction. Projects initiated by city or town staff require more in-depth review to ensure their adherence with statewide policies and compliance with the Project Development and Design Guide. Within the MassDOT Highway Division, the local District Office has the primary responsibility for conducting this review and assisting the community through the project initiation process outlined below.

Step 1: Project Request

- A. Proponent Identifies Problem/Need/Opportunity in MaPIT: The project proponent creates a polygon within the MaPIT tool that indicates the area where a transportation problem, need, and/or opportunity has been identified. Using the tool's geoprocessing screen and question prompts, the project proponent provides all the information available at the time on the existing facility, the condition of assets, mobility issues, bicycle and pedestrian accommodations, safety issues, economic development importance, social equity interest, and environmental constraints. This information is then summarized in Part I of the Project Initiation Form (PIF) that is autogenerated by MaPIT. Once complete, the proponent must submit the form for acceptance by the appropriate MassDOT Highway Division District Office; an e-mail notification of this submittal is automatically sent by MaPIT to personnel engaged in the project development process. Note that during this review period, the proponent will not be able to edit the PIF further until the review is complete. In cases where the MassDOT Highway Division District is the project proponent, notification of this submittal will automatically be sent by MaPIT to the responsible asset or program manager(s). MassDOT staff will then conduct an initial review to clarify any issues and/or questions and to fill in any incomplete information (During this review period, the proponent will not be able to edit the PIF further until the review is complete).

See the MaPIT Guide for more assistance in creating a project.

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B. **Communication by District:** Once Part I of the PIF has been completed, District staff must communicate with the proponent to discuss the problems, needs, and/or opportunities they have identified. For municipality-initiated projects, a meeting and site visit with the proponent shall be scheduled to discuss the project in detail. The site visit with the proponent should include the following discussion items:

- **Overview of Existing Conditions** – Discussion should include a review of general asset condition, congestion levels during peak and non-peak hours, pedestrian and bicycle accommodations, transit routes and schedules, the area’s context within the overall transportation system, crashes and other safety issues, and environmental conditions.
- **Discussion of Local Context** – The proponent should describe all related background information, including: the potential economic effects, compatibility of a potential project with city/town plans – including the complete streets policy, the level of support from elected officials, and the public outreach to date along with any feedback received from interested parties.
- **Compatibility with Regional and Statewide Policies** – District staff should review how the identified problem/need/opportunity aligns with all relevant regional and statewide policies, including: the respective statewide modal plans, MPO/RPA studies and/or UPWP tasks, MassDOT requirements for roadway cross section, ADA requirements, Healthy Transportation Policy considerations, climate resiliency, affordable housing, and any potential impacts on Environmental Justice and Title VI communities.
- **Scope of Potential Improvement Projects** – This discussion should identify the preliminary goals and objectives for any improvement project. It should include a review of the common types of improvements used to address the identified problem/need/opportunity, including any options that the proponent has considered. It should also include the defined limits of the project, and if the proposed limits seem logical or should be extended or reduced prior to project initiation. District staff should outline basic project requirements that will need to be included in the project. This should include how pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users will be accommodated, the design justification workbook process for controlling criteria and healthy transportation requirements.
- **Discussion of Potential Risk Factors** – The District staff should review common risk factors that transportation projects encounter, including: lack of adequate right-of-way, utility impacts, stormwater mitigation, wetlands restrictions, potential wildlife impacts, potential impacts on historic properties and districts, and the need to preserve designated parkland.
- **Funding** – District staff should make sure that the proponent understands the elements of the federal funding process (such as the Transportation Improvement Program process) in

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their respective region and the MassDOT prioritization and scoring process. District staff may also want to highlight alternatives to federal funding such as Chapter 90 aid and state grant programs like MassWorks and MassTrails.

- **Project Approval and Project Review** – District staff should discuss how the project approval process works, and what will be required if their project gets approved. This discussion should include required submittals outlined in the MassDOT Project review Committee (PRC) approvals letter, and the need to submit the project back to PRC for approval if there is a request to extend the limits of the project or if there is an increase in the project cost.

For projects initiated by MassDOT Highway Division staff or another non-MassDOT State Agency, District reviewing staff must communicate with the proponent to discuss the problems, needs, and/or opportunities they have identified.

- C. **Determination of Project Need:** Following the meeting and/or site visit with the proponent, District staff will determine if the project need is suitable for initiation of a new project. If the need for a project is determined and there is a logical, low-risk solution that meets those needs, the District staff should approve the proposed project for advancement. If there is no demonstrated need or the potential project is not well defined as a MassDOT Highway Division Project, the District staff should reject the initial request for a project. In both cases, an automated email notification will be sent to all personnel engaged with the project development process.

Part I of the PIF is amended following coordination with District staff

In the case where the need for a project is determined but there is no clear, low-risk solution, or there are multiple ways to address the identified problem/need/opportunity, then the District staff should recommend that the proponent complete a project planning report before approval. Following completion of a project planning report, the proponent should make all necessary changes to Part I of the PIF and resubmit through MaPIT. Separately, the proponent should submit the planning report and all relevant documentation to the District. District staff will then review the revised submission and related materials and approve the advancement of the potential project if it is determined that there is consensus on the project definition.

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Step 2: Project Proposal

A. **Proponent Outlines Improvements in MaPIT:** Following the approval to advance the proposed project, the proponent will gain access to Part II and Part III of the PIF through MaPIT. The question prompts in Part II define the project that will address the problem/need/opportunity identified in Part I, and Part III addresses the proposed project cost. The proponent will provide a project scope of work and estimated costs for construction and design. Once complete, the proponent must submit the PIF for acceptance by the appropriate MassDOT Highway Division District Office; an e-mail notification of this submittal is automatically sent by MaPIT to all personnel engaged with the project development process (during this review period, the proponent will not be able to edit the PIF further until the review is complete.) Separately, the proponent should submit all supplemental documentation to the District, including any project planning report, new traffic counts, or concept plans.

A project should not be initiated unless the proponent expects to begin design of the project within two years of approval

B. **District Review of PIF:** The District staff will conduct a review of the PIF to clarify any issues and/or questions and to fill in any incomplete information. District staff will determine if the proposed project improvements in Part II meet the needs outlined in Part I and if they are suitable for advancement. If the proposed improvements for a project are determined to be appropriate and there is a logical, low-risk solution that meets those needs, the District staff should accept the completed PIF. If the proposed improvements do not meet the needs, the District staff should reject the PIF. In the case the PIF is rejected, the proponent will regain the ability to edit the form and resubmit if further justification or information is needed. In the case of either acceptance or rejection, an automated e-mail notification will be sent to all personnel engaged with the project development process.

In the case where the need for a project is determined appropriate but there is no clear, low-risk solution, or there are multiple ways to address the identified problem/need/opportunity, then the District staff should recommend that the town complete a project planning report before approval of the completed PIF. Following completion of a project planning report, the proponent should make all necessary changes to the PIF. Separately, the proponent should submit the planning report and all relevant documentation to the District. District staff will then

A project planning report may be needed if the proponent cannot identify a single, clear low-risk, solution

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review the revised PIF submission and related materials and approve the advancement of the potential project if it is determined that there is consensus on the project definition.

Step 3: Project Creation

- A. Update Project Info: The District staff will then submit the project to Project Info through a MaPIT push that occurs after the PIF is approved. Following the push of information initiated via MaPIT, Project Info will be populated with the relevant information to the fullest extent. An automated e-mail alert will be sent to all personnel engaged with the project development process notifying them of the project's acceptance including the official project name and project number. The district staff should also send the proponent a PDF printout generated by MaPIT which includes all three parts of the completed PIF along with the geoprocessing results from the application. After Project Info has been populated the District staff must edit Project Info to address any alerts, assign a readiness date, fill out the Contract Advertising and Planning Estimator (CAPE) and to submit the project to PRC for review. The District staff should be sure to include the following key data: primary funding source(s), police/flaggers, trainees, utilities, and the design contingency amounts when filling out the CAPE. At this point, the District staff should also fill out the Roadway, Bridge, or other asset Project Checklist which can be populated using MaPIT and PIF data. The remaining fields in the checklist should be filled out as accurately as possible.

Providing more detailed and thorough information on the project leads to a more accurate score

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- B. **Draft Project Score:** The MassDOT District staff will review all pertinent information from the PIF to understand the draft project score assigned by MaPIT. The draft score for the project is based on the Highway Division’s vetted criteria derived directly from the Project Selection Advisory Committee. The draft score will be used by the Project Evaluation Working Group (also known as the Pre-PRC) to ensure the scoring is consistent between projects. All draft Project Scoresheets, including the Project Alerts sheet, and maps of the project extents should be sent to MassDOT Highway Division Highway Design, Environmental Services, and other appropriate sections by the Wednesday preceding the Project Evaluation Working Group meeting so it can be included on the agenda for the triannual meeting.
- C. **Conduct Project Evaluation Working Group Meeting:** The Working Group will meet two weeks before the PRC meeting to review and modify the draft PIFs and Project Scoresheets prepared by the District staff. The Working Group is chaired by the Highway Design Engineer, and includes but is not limited to representatives from all six District offices, Environmental, Highway Design, Asset Management, Traffic Engineering, Pavement Management, Right-of-Way, Federal Aid Program Reimbursement Office (FAPRO), Office of Diversity and Civil Rights (ODCR), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Office of Transportation Planning. Following all modifications approved by the Working Group to the Project Scoresheet, the final project score will then be entered into Project Info by the Friday before the PRC meeting.

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- D. **Prepare Revised Project Forms and PRC meeting material:** District staff will make any modifications necessary to create the final version of the PIF and Project Scoresheet for each project and will store them on Project Info in the PRC folder using the standard file naming conventions. Staff will also manually enter the final project score into the Project Review tab in Project Info for display on the PRC agenda. The PRC Secretary will then prepare the final agenda for all submitted projects on an excel spreadsheet that includes the project score and other pertinent data about the project such as the description, project number, estimated costs, design responsibility, and anticipated readiness date. The final agenda will then be sent out to the PRC committee the Monday before the meeting. Prior to the PRC meeting, the chair of the Project Evaluation Working Group, the PRC Secretary, and other necessary staff should conduct a pre-meeting to discuss details of the agenda in preparation for the upcoming meeting.

Timeline for Project Review Prior to PRC Meeting

<i>Weeks Before PRC Meeting</i>	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
3	Draft PRC Meeting Agenda distributed				
2			Draft Project Scoresheets and maps of Project Extents Due	Pre-PRC Meeting	
1					Final Project Score entered into Project Info and revised project forms submitted to PRC Secretary
0	PRC Meeting Agenda distributed to attendees			PRC Meeting	

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- E. **Conduct Project Review Committee (PRC) Meeting:** The PRC meets three times a year (or more as determined by the Chief Engineer) and is chaired by the Chief Engineer. The PRC is comprised of the Deputy Chief Engineer of Project Development, District Project Development Engineers, PRC Secretary, and representatives from Asset Management, Project Management, Environmental, Right-of-Way, Bridges and Structures, Traffic Engineering, Highway Maintenance, Highway Operations, FAPRO, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the Office of Transportation Planning. The PRC will review the Project Forms and take one of the following actions:

APPROVE:	The project moves forward into design and programming review by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO).
TABLE:	No action is taken on the project and it is kept on the agenda for the next meeting; or
DENY:	The project is removed from consideration for design and programming review by the MPO. It should be noted that projects are often denied at this stage because it is determined by the PRC that funding processes outside the Transportation Improvement Program are more appropriate and afford a more streamlined implementation.

For approved projects, the PRC will assign:

- A MassDOT Highway Division Project Manager, and
- An estimated advertising date for a project that has been programmed in the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or Capital Investment Plan (CIP). Otherwise an advertising date will be assigned outside the 5-year STIP/CIP cycle until the project is programmed.

Once assigned, the Project Manager should evaluate and make changes to the Project Scoping checklist and PIF if necessary. The PRC Secretary will prepare a meeting summary memorandum and send it to the PRC meeting members.

- F. **Notify External Proponents (including Municipalities):** The MassDOT District Office will prepare a letter to any external proponent describing the PRC action with copies to the District Project Development Engineers, Highway Administrator, Chief Engineer, Regional Planning Organization, upload the letter to the Project Info Repository, and send an email notification of approval to the Office of Transportation Planning; and when the proponent is a municipality the Director of Project Management. The District Offices will notify each MPO via copy of each

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letter for the projects approved in their respective region(s) with specific steps that the proponents need to take within 2 years to demonstrate sufficient progress. The District will expect the letter to be signed and returned as acknowledgment of the municipality's responsibilities. The District Office shall also notify municipalities of MassDOT projects within their communities. Templates for these notification letters are located at:
S:\MassHighway\PRC\Sample Approval Letters.

- G. **Update Project Info:** The PRC Secretary will update the Project Management Tab with the Project Manager identified by the PRC, project PRC status, and any other information necessary from the PRC Meeting. The Advertising Program Manager will then update advertising dates and any pertinent information necessary.
- H. **Request PARS Number:** The assigned Project Manager will request a PARS number for payroll and project development costs related to the project using information from the completed PIF.

Project Deactivation

The list of projects approved by the Project Review Committee will be regularly reviewed to ensure that it consists only of projects actively in development that continue to meet the project need outlined at their initiation. Projects that meet the criteria listed in the steps below for both municipalities and state agencies will be removed from that list.

PROCEDURE FOR MUNICIPAL PROJECTS

- 1) **STATE REQUEST FOR DEACTIVATION**
 - a) After one year without activity, municipality receives email notification from the District reminding them of requirements in PRC letter.
 - b) After two years without activity, municipality receives email from the District that project is going to be deactivated unless they respond within thirty (30) days. Email will also direct municipality to resubmit to PRC (as a new project through MaPIT) if they wish to restart the project once it has been deactivated.
 - c) After thirty (30) days without a response, the District then emails this communication to the Advertising Program Manager requesting deactivation.
 - d) Advertising Program Manager marks the project as inactive in Project Info and notifies the Project Manager and section director.
 - e) Advertising Program Manager adds the project to the next Project Review Committee meeting agenda under the Deactivated section.
 - f) Project Manager archives all project documentation including:
 - i) Emails

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- ii) Written correspondence
- iii) Project submittals
- g) Project Manager submits PARS Number deactivation request to FAPRO.

2) MUNICIPAL REQUEST FOR DEACTIVATION

- a) Municipality requests deactivation in writing to the DHD with a copy sent to the assigned Project Manager.
- b) The District emails this communication to the Advertising Program Manager.
- c) Advertising Program Manager marks the project as inactive in Project Info and notifies the Project Manager and section director.
- d) Advertising Program Manager adds the project to the next Project Review Committee meeting agenda under the Deactivated section.
- e) Project Manager archives all project documentation including:
 - i) Emails
 - ii) Written correspondence
 - iii) Project submittals
- f) Project Manager submits PARS Number deactivation request to FAPRO.

PROCEDURE FOR STATE PROJECTS

3) Once the Department identifies a project for deactivation, then:

- a) DHD emails the Advertising Program Manager requesting deactivation.
- b) Advertising Program Manager marks the project as inactive in Project Info and notifies the Project Manager and section director.
- c) Advertising Program Manager adds the project to the next Project Review Committee meeting agenda under the Deactivated section.
- d) DHD submits letter to affected municipalities, if needed.
- e) Project Manager archives all project documentation including:
 - i) Emails
 - ii) Written correspondence
 - iii) Project submittals
- f) Project Manager submits PARS Number deactivation request to FAPRO.