



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 MMPO. 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

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and Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

Title VI Coordinator
MRPC
464 Abbott Ave.
Leominster, MA 01453
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One Ashburton Place, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02109
617-994-6000 ~ TTY: 617-994-6196

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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

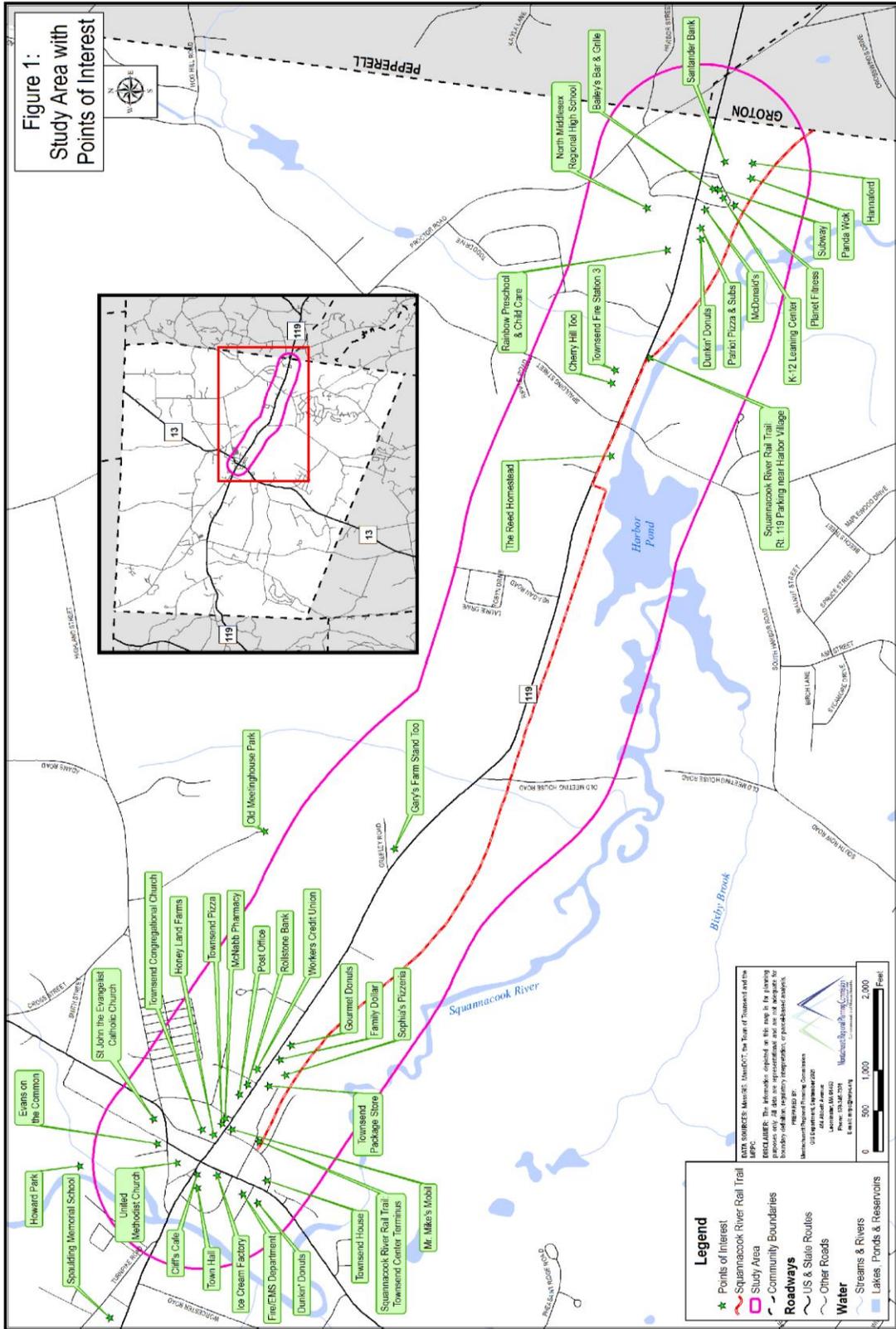
that support and accelerate housing production, spur private development, and create jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

- *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



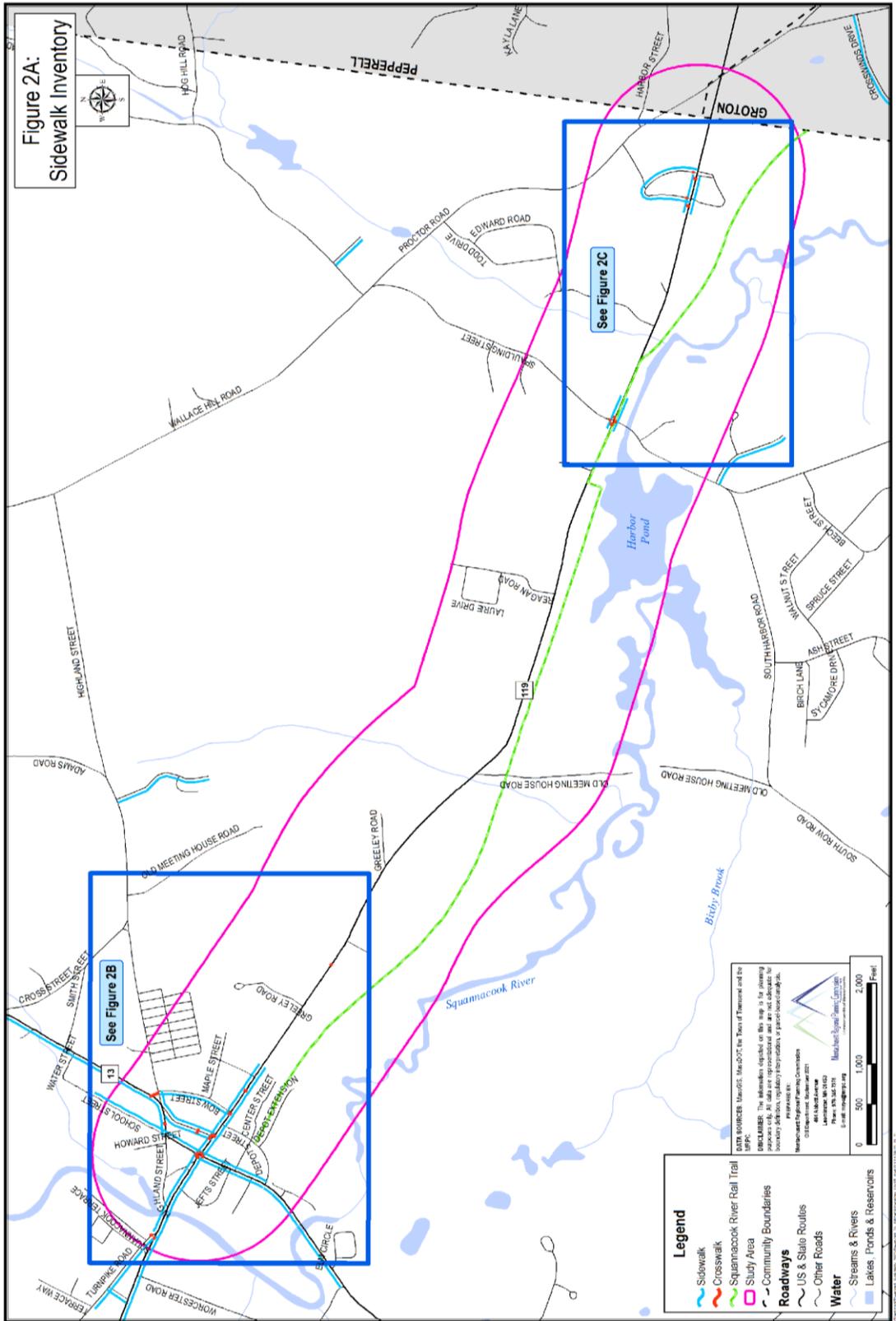
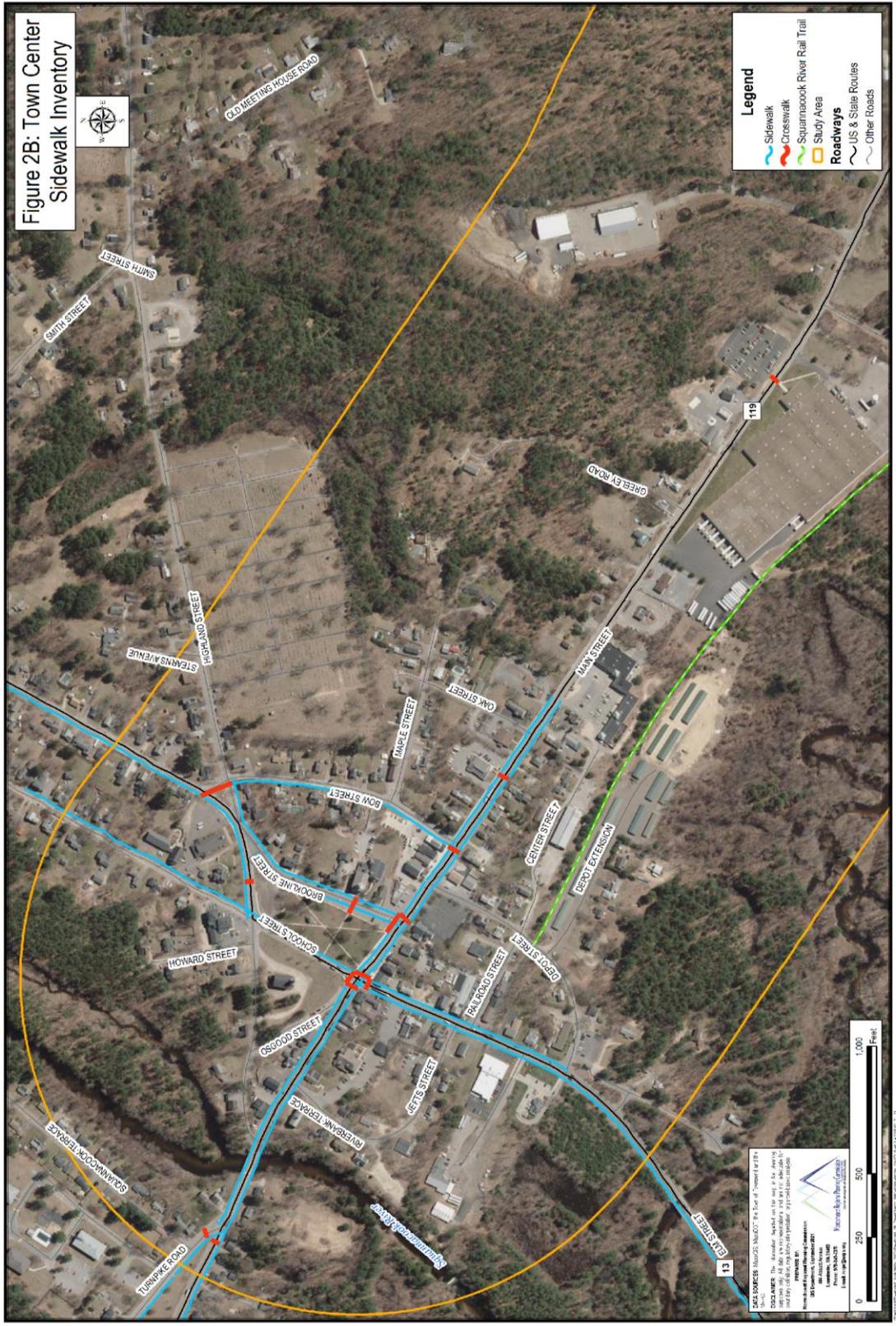
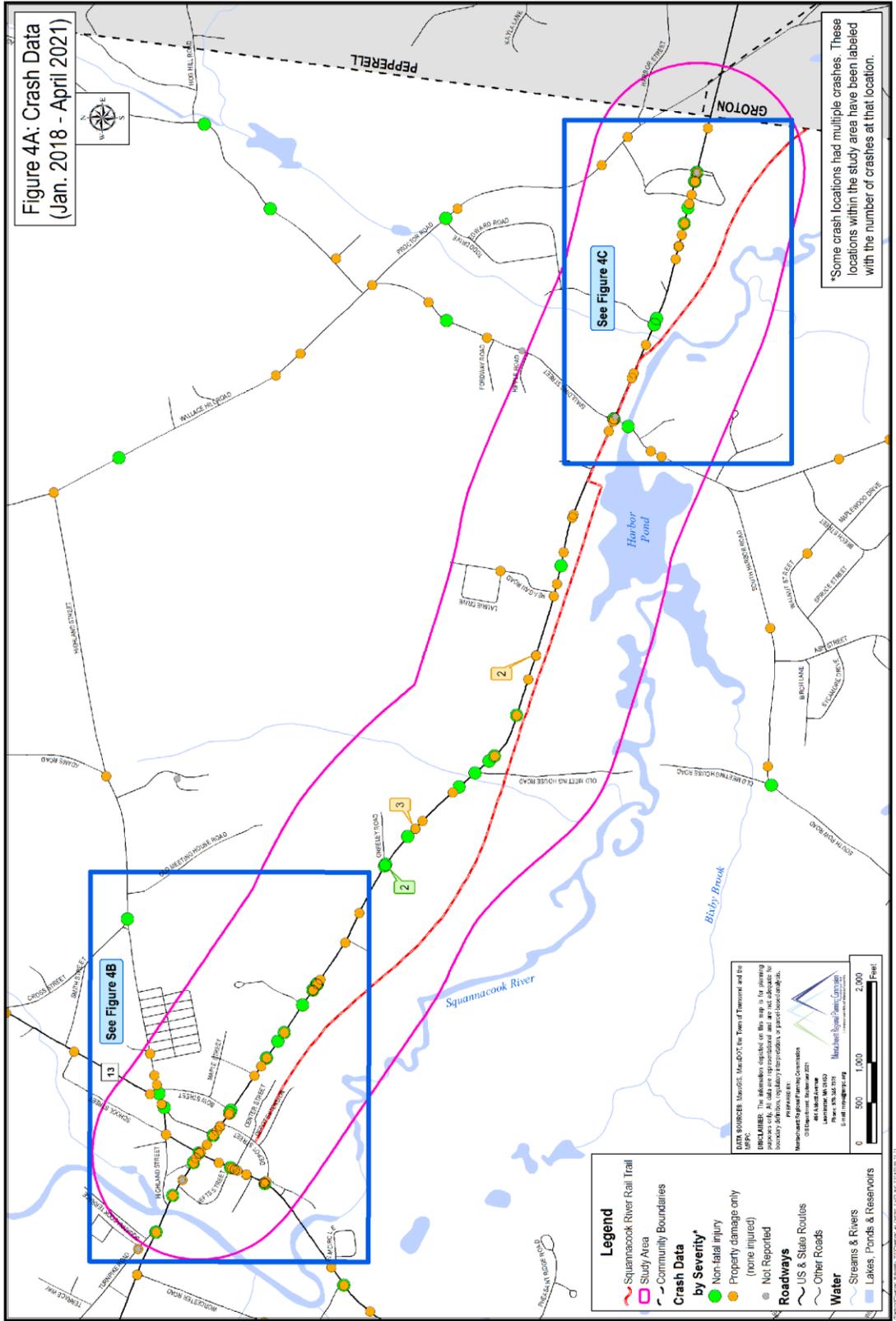


Figure 2A:
Sidewalk Inventory

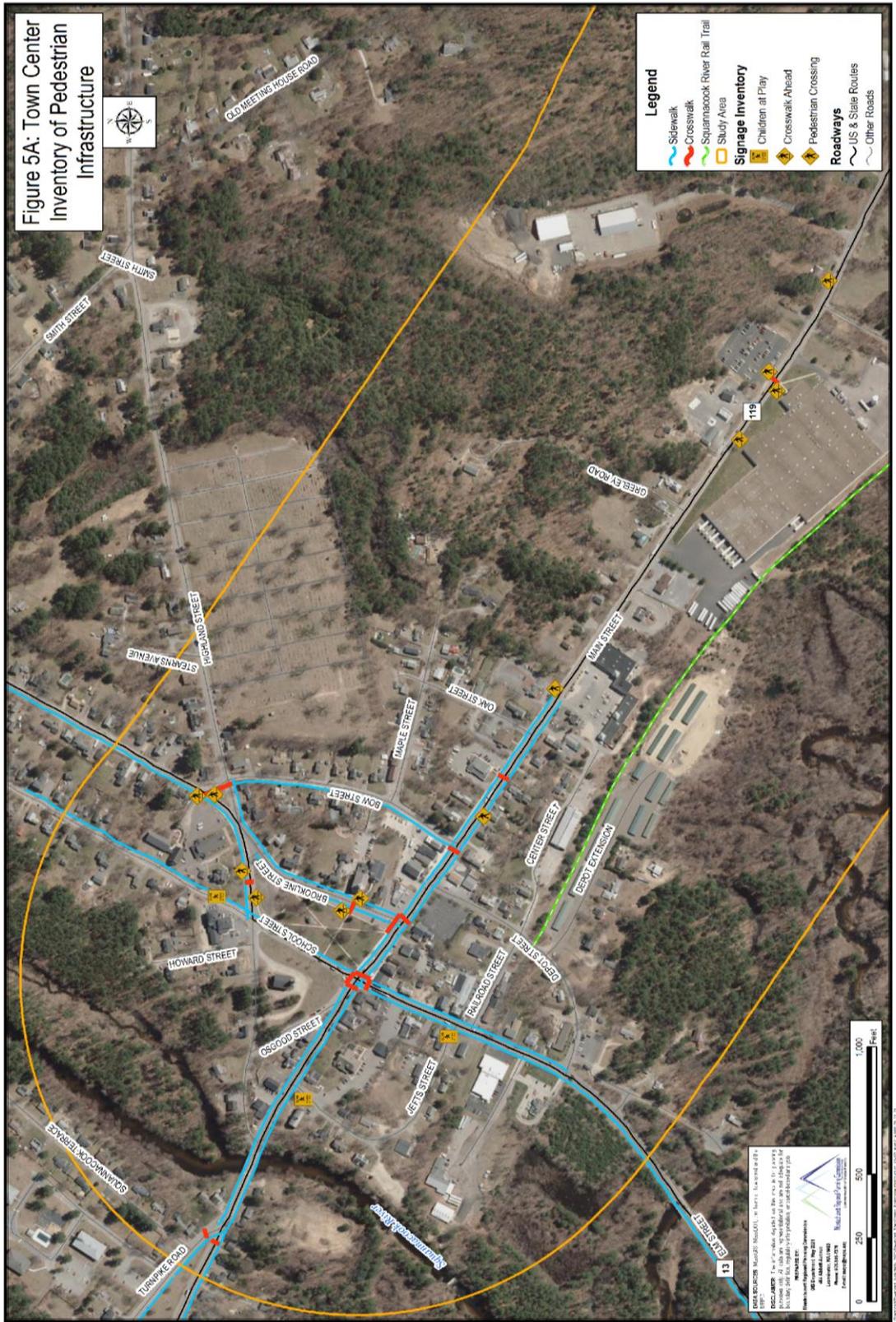












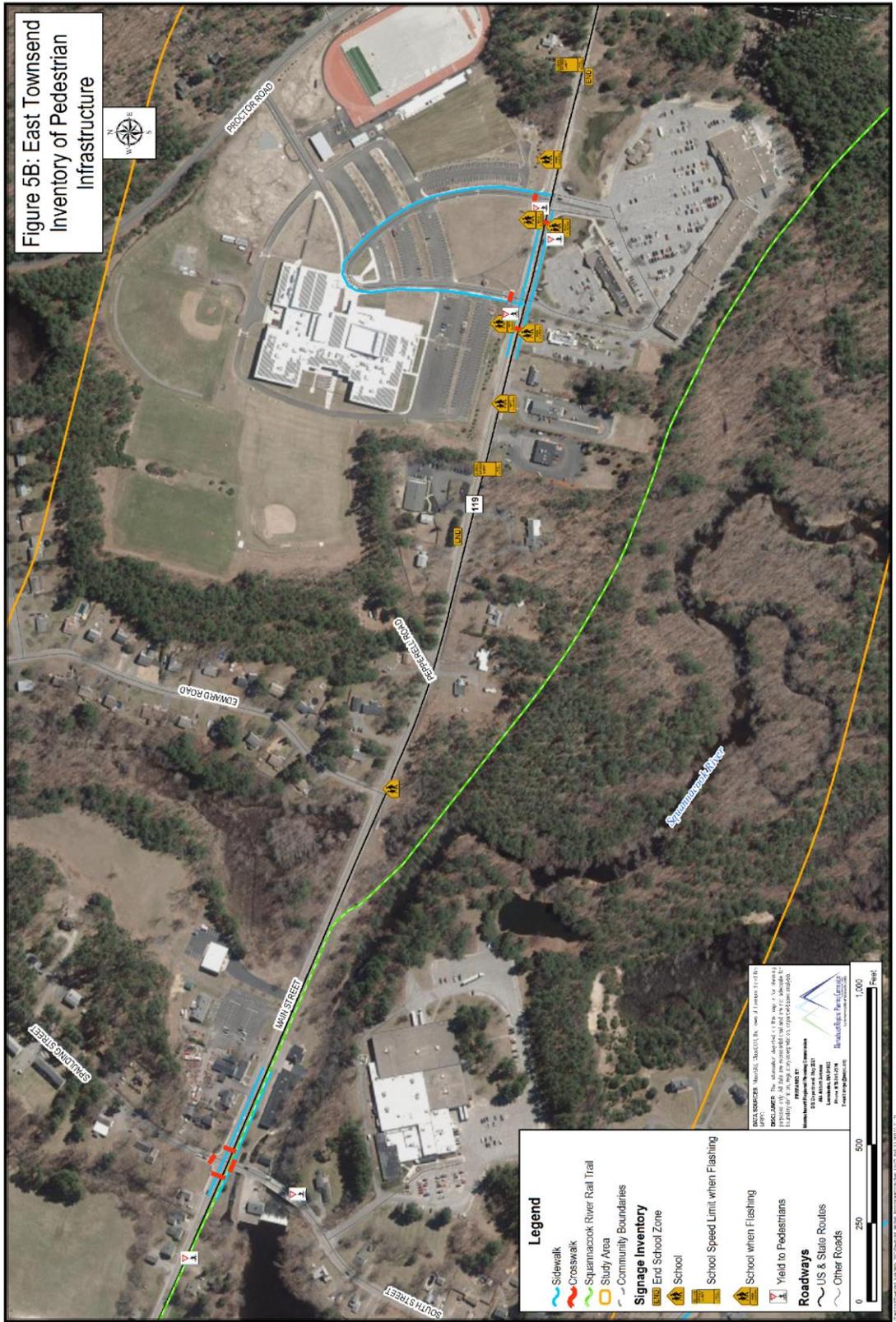
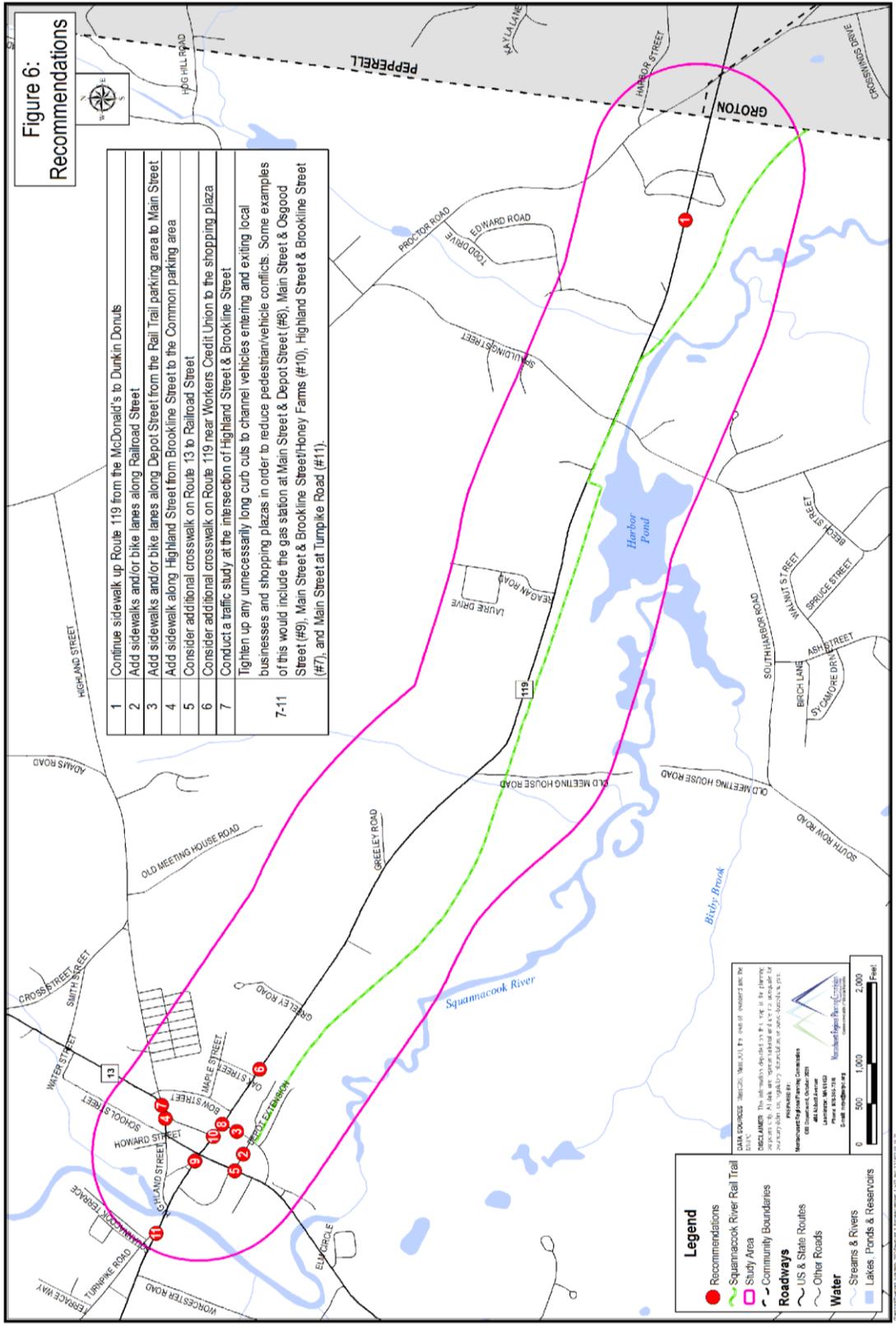


Figure 5B: East Townsend Inventory of Pedestrian Infrastructure



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 there 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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Effective: 12/11/20	Issued: 12/11/20	Supersedes all pages of: HED-08-02-1-000 dated 09/22/08	Authorized: Jonathan L. Gulliver (Signature on original)

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.