



Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation





BICYCLE & PEDESTRIAN

Introduction

Increasing concern for air quality, energy conservation, and rising fuel costs is leading to renewed interest in all available modes of transportation in the Montachusett Region and throughout the state.

In 2000, the US Department of Transportation advised states receiving federal funds that “bicycling and walking facilities will be incorporated into all transportation projects unless exceptional circumstances exist.” There has been a growing interest in the development of adequate facilities for bicycles and pedestrians. These facilities not only add choices for our transportation system users, but add opportunities for healthy transportation too.

The Montachusett Region has been working with each member community to assist with making the transportation system more accessible to all roadway users. State and Federal programs such as GreenDOT, Livability and Safe Routes to School have all been examined and implemented within the Montachusett Region.

GreenDOT

GreenDOT is the Massachusetts Department of Transportation sustainability initiative. It is designed to support the implementation of the following state laws.

- Climate Protection and Green Economy Act (Mass. Gen. L. c. 21N)
- Green Communities Act (Chapter 169 of the Acts of 2008)
- Healthy Transportation Compact (section 33 of Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2009)
- Leading by Example (Executive Order of Governor Patrick, no. 488)
- MassDOT’s youMove Massachusetts planning initiative
- The “Complete Streets” design standards of the 2006 MassDOT Highway Division Project Development and Design Guide, as amended

The GreenDOT initiative incorporates three main goals:

1. Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
2. Promote the healthy transportation modes of walking, bicycling, and public transit
3. Support smart growth development

Livability

The U.S. Department of Transportation recognizes livability as a key priority for transportation. Livability supports initiatives that demonstrate ways to improve the link between public transit and communities through the following basic principles:



Six Principles of Livability

- **Provide more transportation choices** to decrease household transportation costs, reduce our dependence on oil, improve air quality and promote public health.
- **Expand location- and energy-efficient housing choices** for people of all ages, incomes, races and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Improve economic competitiveness of neighborhoods** by giving people reliable access to employment centers, educational opportunities, services and other basic needs.
- **Target federal funding toward existing communities** – through transit-oriented and land recycling – to revitalize communities, reduce public works costs, and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Align federal policies and funding** to remove barriers to collaboration, leverage funding and increase the effectiveness of programs to plan for future growth.
- **Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities** by investing in healthy, safe and walkable neighborhoods, whether rural, urban or suburban.

U.S. DOT's Livability Initiative will enhance the economic and social well-being of all Americans by creating and maintaining a safe, reliable, integrated and accessible transportation network that enhances choices for transportation users, provides easy access to employment opportunities and other destinations, and promotes positive effects on the surrounding community. DOT will build on innovative ways of doing business that promote mobility and enhance the unique characteristics of our neighborhoods, communities and regions...Under the Livability Initiative; Federal policy will enable communities to:

- Better integrate transportation and land use planning.
- Foster multimodal transportation systems and effective multimodal connections.
- Provide more transportation options to improve access to housing, jobs, businesses, services and social activities.
- Increase public participation and enhance coordination of transportation and housing and healthy communities.
- Reduce emissions.
- Plan for unique needs.

(<http://www.fta.dot.gov/>)

Complete Streets

The Complete Streets initiative is a comprehensive multi-modal design philosophy in MassDOT's Project Development and Design Guide, which calls for safe and appropriate accommodations of all roadway users. This approach was developed to put pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users on equal footing with motor-vehicle drivers.



“Complete Streets policies require all road construction and improvement projects to begin with evaluating how the street serves all who use it – pedestrians, cyclists, public transportation vehicles and passengers, trucks and automobiles. An effective complete streets policy should prompt transportation agencies to:

- Restructure procedures to accommodate all users on every project
- Re-write design manuals to include the safety of all users
- Provide training for planners and engineers in balancing the needs of diverse users
- Establish performance measures to gauge how well the streets are serving all users.

“ (www.completestreets.org)

Safe Routes to School

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program is managed by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT). This program helps to educate students and parents on the value of walking and bicycling for travel to and from school. The program collaborates with schools, superintendents, public officials, principals, teachers, parent-teacher organizations, and neighbors to encourage safe, healthy trip options.

Currently there are 19 schools within the Montachusett Region participating in this program.

Community

Ashburnham
Ashby
Ayer
Fitchburg

Gardner

Harvard
Leominster

Lunenburg
Shirley

School

Briggs Elementary School
Ashby Elementary School
Page Hilltop Elementary School
Crocker Elementary School
McKay Campus School
Memorial Middle School
North Central Charter School
Reingold Elementary School
South Street Elementary School
Elm Street Elementary School
Gardner Middle School
Helen Mae Sauter Elementary School
Waterford Elementary School
Harvard Elementary School
Johnny Appleseed Elementary School
Northwest Elementary School
Lunenburg Primary School
Lura White Elementary School
Shirley Middle School



Bicycling

Bikeways are special routes and/or facilities established to facilitate the movement of bicycles as an energy efficient transportation and/or recreational mode of travel. The Montachusett Region has a limited number of bicycle facilities due to a lack of funding and/or interest from our member communities and MPO for such projects. In a 2006 community survey, 41% of respondents stated that more information regarding bicycle/pedestrian commuting and travel was needed in the Montachusett Region.

The Montachusett has many roadways that would benefit as a bike route. Major routes such as Route 2A, 12, 140, 101, & 119 would be ideal transportation routes for on road bicycling. Unfortunately, most of these roadways consist of high traffic, speeding and narrow road widths which would pose a safety concern.

In 2008 Massachusetts developed a “Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan”. This plan consists of existing and proposed bikeways and recommendations regarding bicycling in Massachusetts. There are many reasons for improving bicycle transportation – safety, health, environment, mobility, congestion and demographics, to name a few. The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) endorses the “five E’s” for successful bicycle planning;

- Engineering – Bicycle programs should follow good planning and design practices
- Education – educate bicyclists and motorists
- Encouragement – encourage people to ride bicycles safely
- Enforcement – enforce the rules of the road
- Evaluation- evaluate programs and projects

Existing Bikeways/Rail Trails within the Montachusett Region

Mass Central Rail Trail – (Clinton/Sterling) This trail has been extended to Sterling Center along the Fitchburg & Worcester RR right-of-way, which ran from Sterling Junction through Sterling Center to Pratt's Junction. An estimated 21 miles of this trail are already open. The Sterling section is complete from Gates Road (where there is parking) north across the Quag bridge to the Sterling Cider Mill (where there is parking) at Waushacum Avenue/Newell Hill Road. It is hoped that the Sterling rail trail can be extended through Sterling Center north to the Police Station. The Mass Central Rail Trail is planned to extend from Northampton to Boston, and has been completed locally from Rutland to West Boylston (with some gaps). Part of the Sterling trail may likely serve to connect the Mass Central Rail Trail from West Boylston around to the north of the Wachusett Reservoir to Clinton, Berlin, Hudson, etc. and to Boston.

Nashua River Rail Trail – (Ayer/Groton) This trail is a former railroad right of way that travels 11 miles through the towns of Ayer, Groton, Pepperell and Dunstable. Managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, the trail was officially opened to the public on October 25, 2002.



North Central Pathway – (Gardner/Winchendon) This recreational trail connects the communities of Gardner and Winchendon. The trail was broken down into phases to ease the development process.

- Phase 1 – Dedicated paved trail from Park Street past Crystal Lake to Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC)
- Phase 2 – Using existing roads from MWCC, Kelton & Stone Streets to Route 140
- Dunn Park Spur – Existing roads from MWCC to Dunn Park with dedicated connector at the Middle School
- Phase 3 –3.2 miles paved from Route 140 to Old Gardner Road in Winchendon.
- Phase 4 – Downtown Winchendon to Glenn Allen Street
- Phase 5 – \$1.95 Million is allocated to this phase on the 2013 TIP
- Phase 6 – The North Central Pathway Committee is currently working on developing this phase.
- Phase 7 – Proposed from Phase 1 to Park Street and down Eaton Street.
- Phase 8 - From Eaton Street to the Gardner City Forest on Route 140.

Phases 1-5 are currently complete.

Proposed Bikeways/Rail Trails within the Montachusett Region include:

Ashburnham Rail Trail – (Ashburnham) This trail would provide a connection from the Ashburnham town center to South Ashburnham and then possible future expansion northward into Winchendon to connect to the North Central Pathway.

This trail is still a priority for the town of Ashburnham but due to a lack of funding it is on hold.



Twin City Rail Trail – (Fitchburg/Leominster) This bikeway has been proposed by the two communities to connect the two major urbanized centers and to reduce traffic congestion on Route 12. This bikepath would use the railroad tracks parallel to Route 12 from Leominster center to Fitchburg Center and possibly connect to the existing Steam Line Trail. Due to a property appraisal dispute between the railroad and the two cities, this project is being put on hold until this issue can be resolved.

Pedestrians

The majority of the communities in the Montachusett Region are rural in nature with small downtown areas. The areas typically contain sidewalks within the major activity centers. The urban communities have a more extensive infrastructure within the central business districts that facilitates pedestrian circulation. Efforts have been made to improve pedestrian access by means of sidewalk improvements, crosswalk delineation, and construction of handicapped ramps, improved lighting, and connections to municipal parking lots. Designated fixed route bus stops are also common along the sidewalks providing a connection between different modes of travel.

Like the bikeways/routes, pedestrian facilities in the Montachusett Region are also limited due to a lack of funding. During these tough economical times, communities tend to focus their monies elsewhere. Local communities have expressed interest and support of improved pedestrian ways, often in connection with potential bikeways, but they lack adequate funding for the design and construction of these facilities.

Community Trail Survey

In September, 2006 a Community Trail Survey was sent out to twenty two municipalities, as well as Devens, to gather more information regarding each community's interest in trails as well as updating the MRPC trail inventory. Out of the 225 surveys that were sent out, 27 were returned representing 18 MRPC communities. The communities of Clinton, Hubbardston, Petersham, Lunenburg and Winchendon had no response.



The results of the survey were as follows:

Is your community interested in trail development? 96% Yes 0% No 4% Unsure

Which of the following would encourage trail use within your community?

- 78% More Trail Connections
- 41% More information regarding bicycle/pedestrian commuting and travel
- 78% More information regarding recreational trail use
- 30% Other (Additional trail/maintenance funding, trail maps, trail connections to other states/regions, better trial locations, promoting walking/hiking clubs)

Inventory

Within the Montachusett Region, several communities have worked to develop trails and bicycle paths and/or ways. A few are currently in operation with several more planned for expansion or construction. Transportation enhancement funds have been utilized as a mechanism to implement several of these bicycle and/or pedestrian ways. Enhancement projects have been submitted to the MRPC through an established project selection procedure. These projects have been allocated funds through the local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) process.

The MRPC has continued its Trail Inventory Project through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) funded by federal and state monies. The MRPC started this project in the Spring of 2005 in an effort to better identify existing and proposed trails in the region. These reports list mostly hiking trails but also include bikeways and rail trails. At the time of this report, 19 out of 22 MRPC communities have completed trail inventory reports. The remaining three communities will be completed in the fall of 2011.

Funding Opportunities

Trail cost estimates are often based on the trails surface type. Some things to consider while decided the surface type are:

- User acceptance and satisfaction
- Accessibility
- Cost to purchase and install materials
- Cost of maintaining the surface
- Life expectancy
- Availability of material

Hard surfaces often include materials such as asphalt, concrete, crushed stone, boardwalk, and recycled materials (ex. Tires). A soft surface trail often includes natural earth and woodchips.



According to the Rails-To-Trails Conservancy, the cost estimates for these materials are as follows (cost is per mile):

- Asphalt - \$200K - \$300K
- Concrete - \$300K - \$500K
- Crushed/granular stone - \$80K - \$120K
- Boardwalk - \$1.5 mil – \$2 mil
- Natural Earth - \$50K-70K (10ft wide trail)
- Woodchips - \$65K – 85K (10ft wide trail)

Because trail development can often be costly, we've included some funding options to get you started.

Federal Funding

Recent passage of *Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)* continues efforts begun in The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and its predecessor the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). These authorization legislations identify various federal surface transportation programs for highways, highway safety, and transit.

The SAFETEA-LU five-year legislation contains provisions for Bicycle and Pedestrian funding under varying programs and titles. Please consult state, federal and regional officials regarding questions on these programs for the most current information.

The following is a brief description of federal funding sources related to bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Surface Transportation Program (STP)

STP is the primary source of funds to the states for construction/reconstruction of roads, highways, and bridges. Funds can also be used for transit and bicycle/pedestrian projects as well; however, competition for these funds is exceedingly hard and currently compete with highway and bridge projects.

Transportation Enhancement Program (TE)

This is the largest, most popular, funding source for trails, sidewalks, and other bicycle/pedestrian facilities. Previous legislation (ISTEA) created the TE program as a way to promote multi-modal transportation by providing funds for projects such as:

1. Provision of pedestrian and bicycle facilities
2. Provision of pedestrian and bicycle safety and educational activities



3. Acquisition of scenic or historic easements and sites
4. Scenic or historic highway programs including tourist and welcome centers
5. Landscaping and scenic beautification
6. Historic preservation
7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures or facilities
8. Conversion of abandoned railway corridors to trails
9. Control and removal of outdoor advertising
10. Archaeological planning & research
11. Environmental mitigation of runoff pollution and provision of wildlife connectivity
12. Establishment of transportation museums

TE projects must related to surface transportation and must qualify under one or more of the 12 eligible categories listed above.

The Rails to Trails Conservancy describes TE programs in the online manual “*Acquiring Rail Corridors: A How To Manual*” as follows:

The Enhancements provisions are administered by each state's Department of Transportation (DOT). To receive Enhancements funds, you will need to submit a formal application to your state DOT. In most states, the project sponsor submitting an Enhancements application must be a local or state agency, although some states also allow nonprofit organizations to submit applications. Nonprofits are generally required to demonstrate some level of government sponsorship or endorsement before their applications are considered.

All Enhancements awards require that the project sponsor or the state provide at least 20% of the project's funding. The federal government provides the remaining 80%. This local match requirement is an extremely important issue that project sponsors need to address carefully, especially since matching rules and ratios vary from state-to-state.

Since requests for Enhancements funding exceed the funds available, Enhancements funds are awarded through a highly competitive selection process. In most states, the selection process begins when applications are submitted to the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or other regional transportation planning body. MPOs play an active role in screening, endorsing, prioritizing, and, in some cases, actually selecting projects for funding. Once your application has been reviewed by your MPO, it will be passed along to the state DOT for statewide review. Many states have created statewide advisory committees to assist in evaluating projects. These advisory committees typically consist of citizens and representatives from the state DOT and other state agencies such as Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Tourism.

Source: <http://www.railstotrails.org>

**Congestion, Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ)**

The CMAQ program, jointly administered by the FHWA and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), was reauthorized in 2005 under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). It was developed to fund projects that assist in achieving the goals set forth in the Clean Air Act. In metropolitan areas classified as “non-attainment” i.e. they do not meet the national air quality standards for ozone and carbon monoxide levels, bicycle and pedestrian facilities may be eligible for funding. This program provides over \$8.6 billion dollars in funds to State DOTs, MPOs, and transit agencies to invest in projects that reduce criteria air pollutants regulated from transportation-related sources over a period of five years (2005-2009). Specific analysis needs to be conducted to determine project eligibility under the CMAQ program.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

According to the Federal Highway website, “The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is an assistance program of the Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Federal transportation funds benefit recreation including hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

The RTP funds come from the Federal Highway Trust Fund, and represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from non-highway recreational fuel use: fuel used for off-highway recreation by snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-highway motorcycles, and off-highway light trucks.

The RTP funds are distributed to the States by legislative formula: half of the funds are distributed equally among all States, and half are distributed in proportion to the estimated amount of non-highway recreational fuel use in each State...Each State administers its own program. Contact your state RTP Administrator for guidance on State policies and project eligibility requirements.

The Recreational Trails Program Project Database lists most RTP projects funded from 1993 through 2009. The Coalition for Recreational Trails compiled this database from information supplied by State trail administrators.” (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/rectrails/>)

Safe Routes to School (SRTS)

The Safe Routes to Schools Program (SRTS) is a Federal-Aid program of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program was created by Section 1404 of the *Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users Act* (SAFETEA-LU). The SRTS Program is funded at \$612 million over five Federal fiscal years (FY 2005-2009) and is to be administered by State Departments of Transportation (DOTs).



FHWA recommends that SRTS efforts in the United States incorporate – directly or indirectly – five components, often referred to as the “5 E’s”. The 5 E’s are:

1. Engineering – Creating operational and physical improvements to the infrastructure surrounding schools that reduce speeds and potential conflicts with motor vehicle traffic, and establish safer and fully accessible crossings, walkways, trails and bikeways.
2. Education – Teaching children about the broad range of transportation choices, instructing them in important lifelong bicycling and walking safety skills, and launching driver safety campaigns in the vicinity of schools.
3. Enforcement – Partnering with local law enforcement to ensure traffic laws are obeyed in the vicinity of schools (this includes enforcement of speeds, yielding to pedestrians in crossings , and proper walking and bicycling behaviors), and initiating community enforcement such as crossing guard programs.
4. Encouragement – Using events and activities to promote walking and bicycling.
5. Evaluation – Monitoring and documenting outcomes and trends through the collection of data, including the collection of data before and after the intervention(s).

The Massachusetts SRTS program promotes healthy alternatives for children and parents in their travel to and from school. It educates students, parents and community members on the value of walking and bicycling for travel to and from school. The SRTS Program empowers communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity once again.

The Program allows partner schools to qualify for local infrastructure improvements around their school to help improve safety access. SAFETEA-LU specifies that eligible infrastructure-related projects include the planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects that will substantially improve the ability of students to walk and bicycle to school, including

- sidewalk improvements,
- traffic calming and speed reduction improvements,
- pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements,
- on-street bicycle facilities,
- off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities,
- secure bicycle parking facilities, and
- traffic diversion improvements in the vicinity of schools. (Section 1404(f)(1)(A))

Currently there are 18 schools in the MRPC region that have partnered with the Safe Routes to School program. More information on this program can be found at www.commute.com.

Transit Enhancement Funds

The FTA requires that at least one percent of transit expenditures for urbanized areas of more than 200,000 people (known as 5307 formula funds) go to projects that improve access to transit



service. Many of these projects focus on cycling and walking. Contact your transit authority's planner or MPO for more information.

The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program

"The Transportation, Community, and System Preservation (TCSP) Program is a comprehensive initiative of research and grants to investigate the relationships between transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices and identify private sector-based initiatives to improve such relationships. States, metropolitan planning organizations, local governments, and tribal governments are eligible for discretionary grants to carry out eligible projects to integrate transportation, community, and system preservation plans and practices that:

- Improve the efficiency of the transportation system of the United States.
- Reduce environmental impacts of transportation.
- Reduce the need for costly future public infrastructure investments.
- Ensure efficient access to jobs, services, and centers of trade.
- Examine community development patterns and identify strategies to encourage private sector development patterns and investments that support these goals.

Section 1117 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU, Public Law 109-203) authorized the TCSP Program through FY 2009. A total of \$270 million is authorized for this Program in FY's 2005-2009.

The TCSP Program is a FHWA Program being jointly developed with the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Rail Administration, the Office of the Secretary, and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration within the US Department of Transportation, and the US Environmental Protection Agency." (<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tcsp/>)

Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP)

"The Office of Federal Lands Highway (FLH) provides program stewardship and transportation engineering services for planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of the highways and bridges that provide access to and through federally owned lands. FHWA's initial partnership began with the US Forest Service in 1914 and expanded to the National Park Service in 1926. The Federal Lands Highway Program (FLHP) was created by the 1982 Surface Transportation Assistance Act and signed by President Reagan on January 6, 1983.

The primary purpose of the FLHP is to provide financial resources and technical assistance for a coordinated program of public roads that service the transportation needs of Federal and Indian lands. The FLH currently provides transportation engineering and related services in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. One of the major factors associated with the success of the program is the Federal Highway Administration's strong relationship with our Federal, State, local, and tribal partners." (<http://flh.fhwa.dot.gov/>)



“FLHP roads serve federal lands for which state and local governments are not responsible. According to the FLHP, these projects promote "recreational travel and tourism, protect and enhance natural resources, provide sustained economic development in rural areas, and provide needed transportation access for Native Americans." Despite being a "highway" program, trails often benefit as they fulfill the recreational travel and tourism requirement of the program.”
(<http://www.railstotrails.org/>)

National Scenic Byways Program

“The National Scenic Byways (NSB) Program was established under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century. Under the program, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as National Scenic Byways or All-American Roads based on their archaeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational, and scenic qualities. There are 151 such designated Byways in 46 states. The Federal Highway Administration promotes the collection as the America's Byways®.

The National Scenic Byways Discretionary Grants program provides funding for byway-related projects each year, as part of the Federal Highway Administrations Discretionary Grants Program. Projects to support and enhance National Scenic Byways, All-American Roads and State-designated byways are eligible. Applications are prepared online but submitted through the State's byway program agency.” (<http://www.byways.org/learn/program.html>)

Eligible uses for this discretionary grant program for designated FHWA National Scenic Byways include projects that improve bicycle and pedestrian safety along the byway corridor. Applications for National Byway status are submitted to state departments of transportation and then forwarded to FHWA in a competitive process. (www.railtrails.org/)

As with all of the above programs, the final legislation and regulations may affect what types of projects are eligible, what programs are available and what the application procedure would entail. Please contact state and federal officials for the most up-to-date information.

Public Works and Economic Development Program (PWED)

The Public Works Economic Development (PWED) Program provides grants to communities (cities and towns) in Massachusetts to pay for the design and construction of roads and other transportation related projects that support economic development. The Massachusetts Executive Office of Transportation administers the program. The Secretary of Transportation typically makes the awards. Part of the evaluation process includes supporting a balanced and multimodal transportation plan including bike and pedestrian facilities.



Non-Federal Transportation Funding

The following information was taken from the Rails-to-Trails website.

National Recreation Trails (NRT)

Though not a source of funding, NRT designation from the Secretary of the Interior recognizes exemplary existing trails of local or regional significance. NRT designation provides benefits, including access to technical assistance from NRT partners and listing in a database of National Recreation Trails. In addition, some potential support sources will take NRT designation into account when making funding decisions. The NRT program is open to applications.

Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA)

Though not a source of funding, RTCA is a technical assistance arm of the National Park Service dedicated to helping local groups and communities preserve and develop open space, trails and greenways. RTCA is an important resource center for many trail builders in urban, rural and suburban areas. "Instead of money," their Web site notes, "[RTCA] supplies a staff person with extensive experience in community-based conservation to work with a local group on a project."

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

This 50/50 matching grant program is administered by state agencies in cooperation with the National Park Service. Program funds are intended for the acquisition and development of outdoor recreation areas; trails are one priority of this program.

Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant

This Department of Energy program was funded for the first time under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. According to DOE, it "provides funds to units of local and state government, Indian tribes, and territories to develop and implement projects to improve energy efficiency and reduce energy use and fossil fuel emissions in their communities."

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Providing annual grants on a formula basis to local governments and states for a wide range of community planning initiatives, CDBG monies have been used for trails. For example, the Fairfield Heritage Trail in Ohio used CDBG funds for a portion of trail construction. CDBG projects must be used for activities that benefit low- and moderate-income persons, prevent or eliminate slums or blight, and address community development needs having a particular urgency.



Urban and Community Forestry (UCF)

A program of the US Forest Service, UCF "provides technical, financial, research and educational services to local government, non profit organizations community groups, educational institutions, and tribal governments." Trails and greenways are a key part of the program, though Forest Service cooperative programs are in the midst of being redesigned in 2008.

Historic Preservation Funding Sources

Many trail corridors contain historic structures, often of regional or national significance. Sometimes, the corridor itself is of historic significance. First awarded in 2006, Preserve America is a 50/50 grant program that will match non-federal funds. Administered by the National Park Service and focusing on education and heritage tourism, grants are awarded only to designated Preserve America communities and state Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs). Trails are a common recipient of Preserve America grants. Administered by the National Park Service, Save America's Treasures grants can be used only to preserve properties and sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places that are of national significance or designated as a National Historic Landmark. NPS also administers the Historic Preservation Fund, which awards matching grants-in-aid to the states for the restoration of properties on the National Register of Historic Places. To look up your state, tribal or territorial SHPO, visit the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers. For information on the National Register of Historic Places and the process to get a property listed on the Register, visit the NPS National Register of Historic Places Web site.

Brownfields Funding Sources

Many rail corridors are contaminated from years of industrial use. To remediate this environmental pollution, there are many federal and state funding sources for brownfields from which trails can benefit. The Environmental Protection Agency has devoted a section of its Web site to funding and financing for brownfields. Many trails have taken advantage of brownfield funding, including Rhode Island's Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project, the Elkins Railyard redevelopment in West Virginia, and the Assabet River Rail Trail in Massachusetts. A listing from the Trust for Public Land shows examples of brownfields converted to parkland.

Wetlands Restoration Funding Sources

Many railroads were built through environmentally sensitive areas that are now candidates for restoration. Administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is a matching grant program designed to assist states in the "acquisition, restoration, management or enhancement of coastal wetlands." States bordering the Atlantic, Pacific, Gulf of Mexico or Great Lakes are eligible. Although trails cannot be the primary beneficiary of these funds, the program has been used to work on trail infrastructure. For example, the Cape Cod Rail Trail underwent some reconstruction to restore a tidal wetland in 2006 using program funds. Related funding sources include the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership, a source of private money for wetlands restoration, and the Natural Resources



Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture offers technical and financial assistance programs to restore and protect natural resources and wildlife. The U.S. EPA has a full list of federal funding sources for watershed protection.

“Although federal programs have provided new sources of funding for rail-trail acquisition and development, it is important to obtain local financial support to provide necessary matching funds for federal or state grants, or in case federal or state funding is not available.” (www.railtrails.org/)

State Funding

Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Program

“The LAND Program (formerly the Self-Help Program) was established in 1961 to assist municipal conservation commissions acquiring land for natural resource and passive outdoor recreation purposes. Lands acquired may include wildlife, habitat, trails, unique natural, historic or cultural resources, water resources, forest, and farm land. Compatible passive outdoor recreational uses such as hiking, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bird observation and the like are encouraged. Access by the general public is required.

This state program pays for the acquisition of land, or a partial interest (such as a conservation restriction), and associated acquisition costs such as appraisal reports and closing costs.” (Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services)

Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program

“The PARC Program (formerly the Urban Self-Help Program) was established in 1977 to assist cities and towns in acquiring and developing land for park and outdoor recreation purposes. Any town with a population of 35,000 or more year-round residents, or any city regardless of size, that has an authorized park /recreation commission is eligible to participate in the program.

Communities that do not meet the population criteria listed above may still qualify under the "small town," "regional," or "statewide" project provisions of the program.

Only projects that are to be developed for suitable outdoor recreation purposes, whether active or passive in nature, shall be considered for funding. Grants are available for the acquisition of land and the construction, or renovation of park and outdoor recreation facilities, such as swimming pools, zoos, athletic play fields, playgrounds and game courts. Access by the general public is required.” (Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services)

Land and Water Conservation Fund

“The Federal Land & Water Conservation Fund (P.L. 88-578) provides up to 50% of the total project cost for the acquisition, development and renovation of park, recreation or conservation areas. Municipalities, special districts and state agencies are eligible to apply. Nearly 4000 acres have been acquired and hundreds of parks renovated using the \$95.6 million that Massachusetts has received from the state side portion of the federal program since 1965. DCS administers the



state side Land & Water Conservation Fund program in Massachusetts. Access by the general public is required.” (Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services)

Conservation Partnership Grant

“The Conservation Partnership grants provide funding to assist non-public, not-for-profit corporations in acquiring interests in lands suitable for conservation or recreation purposes. Potential projects fall into one of two categories:

- Land or a conservation restriction purchased by an eligible Applicant
- Land or a conservation restriction gift donated to an eligible Applicant

The Act requires that all selected Applicants convey an appropriate perpetual conservation restriction, within the meaning of sections 31 and 32 of Chapter 184 of the General Laws, to either the city or town in which the selected project is located, to be managed by either its conservation or recreation commission, or a state agency, or both. The Act also requires that all projects provide appropriate public access, as determined by the Secretary.

Applications for these grants will be accepted from qualified IRS 501(c)(3) organizations that have been formed for one of the purposes described in Section 4 of Chapter 180 of the General Laws. An organization must have 501(c)(3) status at the time an application is submitted. Municipalities are not eligible for funding.

The Conservation Partnership program is available only during specific times of year, and funds are available only through an open process which includes a qualified response to a Request for Responses (RFR). Check back to this site often for information on the availability of funds each fiscal year.” (Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services)

MassWorks Infrastructure Program

“The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides a one-stop shop for municipalities and other eligible public entities seeking public infrastructure funding to support economic development and job creation. The Program represents an administrative consolidation of six former grant programs:

- Public Works Economic Development (PWED)
- Community Development Action Grant (CDAG)
- Growth Districts Initiative (GDI) Grant Program
- Massachusetts Opportunity Relocation and Expansion Program (MORE)
- Small Town Rural Assistance Program (STRAP)
- Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program provides public infrastructure grants that support four project types:



- Housing development at density of at least 4 units to the acre (both market and affordable units)
- Transportation improvements to enhance safety in small, rural communities
- Community revitalization and sustainable development
- Economic development and job creation and retention

The MassWorks Infrastructure Program is administered by the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development, in cooperation with the Department of Transportation and Executive Office for Administration & Finance.” (www.mass.gov/)

Recreational Trails Grant Program

“The Recreational Trails Program provides funding support for a variety of trail protection, construction and stewardship projects throughout Massachusetts. This national program makes funds available to states to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. The Program is authorized and funded through the federal “Transportation Equity Act for the 21 st Century” known as TEA-21. It is administered on a reimbursement basis by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (formerly DEM), in partnership with the Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board and the Massachusetts Highway Department. Eligible applicants include non-profit organizations, government agencies, and municipalities.” (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation)

Mass ReLeaf Grant Program

“Mass ReLeaf is a trust fund for public tree planting projects in Massachusetts. By seeking public or private funding Mass ReLeaf is able to provide matching grants to support local projects that involve a partnership in the planting and care of trees on public land. The goals of the program are to help communities purchase trees to be planted for energy conservation, screening, community gateway or parking lot enhancement, or to offset urban pollution; and to assure long-term tree survival by emphasizing proper tree selection, planting, aftercare and maintenance.” (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation)

Urban Forest Planning and Education Grants

“The goal of the Urban Forestry program is to assist communities and nonprofit groups in building support for the long-term protection and management of community trees and forests. The USDA Forest Service provides the grant funds that the DCR administers with guidance from the Massachusetts Community Forestry Council. A maximum of \$10,000 is available per project.” (Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation)



Community Preservation Act

“The Community Preservation Act is statewide enabling legislation to allow cities and towns to exercise control over local planning decisions. This legislation strengthens and empowers Massachusetts communities:

- All decisions are local.
- Local people must vote by ballot to adopt the Act.
- Local legislatures must appoint a committee of local people to draw up plans for use of the funds.
- These plans are subject to local comment and approval.
- If residents don't feel the CPA is working as they expected, they can repeal it.

The Community Preservation Act provides new funding sources which can be used to address three core community concerns:

- Acquisition and preservation of open space
- Creation and support of affordable housing
- Acquisition and preservation of historic buildings and landscapes

A minimum of 10% of the annual revenues of the fund must be used for each of the three core community concerns, and up to 5% may be used for administrative expenses of the Community Preservation Committee. The remaining funds can be allocated for any combination of the allowed uses, or for land for recreational use. This gives each community the opportunity to determine its priorities, plan for its future, and have the funds to make those plans happen.

Property taxes traditionally fund the day-to-day operating needs of safety, health, schools, roads, maintenance, - and more. But until the CPA, there was no steady funding source for preserving and improving a community's quality of life and character. The Community Preservation Act can give a community the funds needed to control its future.” (www.communitypreservation.org/)

New England Grassroots Environmental Fund (NEGEF) - (Small Grants)

“NEGEF's small grants program provides grants to groups working on community level issues in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The Fund interprets the word 'environment' broadly and will provide funding for a wide range of activities. Whole systems-thinking is critical to initiatives focused on making our environment better, healthier and more sustainable.

Small grants are intended to support community groups who represent the most exciting energy in the environmental movement that are not being reached by traditional funders.

Successful applicants will have:



- Earned credibility as a grassroots organization through community work which strengthens the role of local citizens in solving environmental problems or developing sound environmental policies;
- Identified a significant community need and developed a clear plan for translating that need into action;
- Developed a vision of the long-range impacts of their work; and
- Demonstrated an ability to account for the expenditure of funds.

NEGEF does not fund the following proposals:

- Educational curriculum and/or in-school projects
- Publication of books or reports
- Lobbying or partisan political activities
- Studies with no follow-up action
- Acquisition of land and/or buildings
- Individuals
- For-profits
- Micro- or mini-grant programs

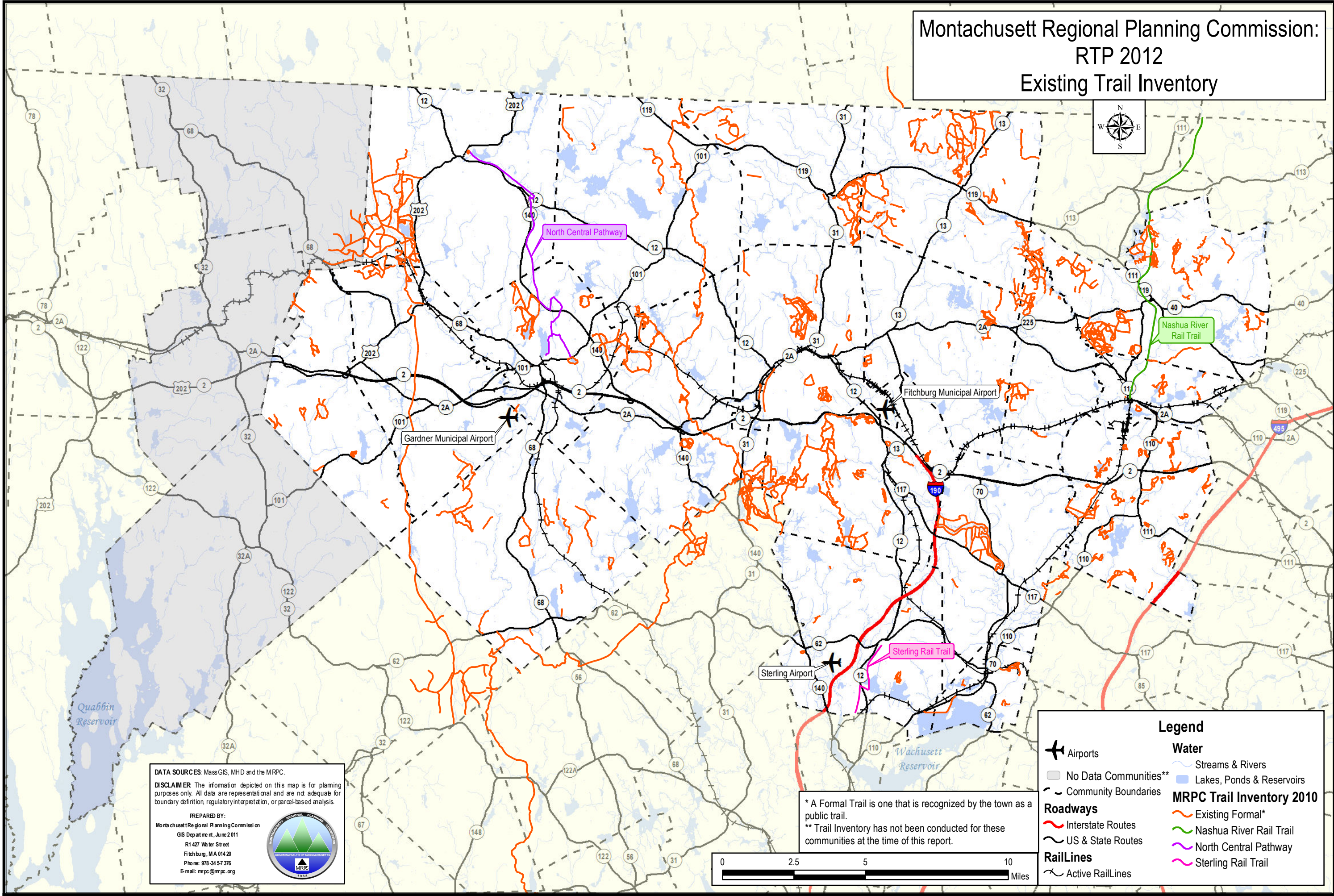
The goals of the Small Grants program are to:

- Increase civic engagement, volunteerism, emerging leaders and community initiatives that create health, just, safe and environmentally sustainable communities at the neighborhood and town level in New England;
- Help community leaders move single issue, backyard debates to positive, inclusive, systemic, constructive, and lasting community solutions;
- Link community-based advocacy with the work of state-wide and national organizations without losing local identity; and
- Establish and maintain informed networks of activists across the region that are committed to building a just and equitable society” (<http://grassrootsfund.org/>)

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

The Trails and Greenways Clearing house states “As rail-trails become increasingly important community development tools, rail-trail projects may be eligible for funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The CDBG program is designed to support community improvement and redevelopment projects. Rail-trails with documentable economic, cultural and historic merit may be eligible for CDBG funding. Seattle's Burke-Gilman Trail and the Baltimore & Annapolis Trail in Maryland both received funds through this program.” For further information on this program, contact the local RPA, chief elected official or planning department.


Montachusett Regional Planning Commission: RTP 2012 Existing Trail Inventory



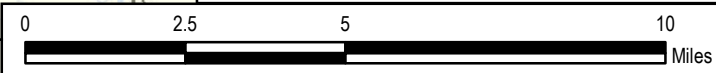
DATA SOURCES: MassGIS, MHD and the MRPC.

DISCLAIMER: The information depicted on this map is for planning purposes only. All data are representational and are not adequate for boundary definition, regulatory interpretation, or parcel-based analysis.

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* A Formal Trail is one that is recognized by the town as a public trail.
** Trail Inventory has not been conducted for these communities at the time of this report.



Legend

Airports

- Airports

No Data Communities**

Community Boundaries

Roadways

- Interstate Routes
- US & State Routes

RailLines

- Active RailLines

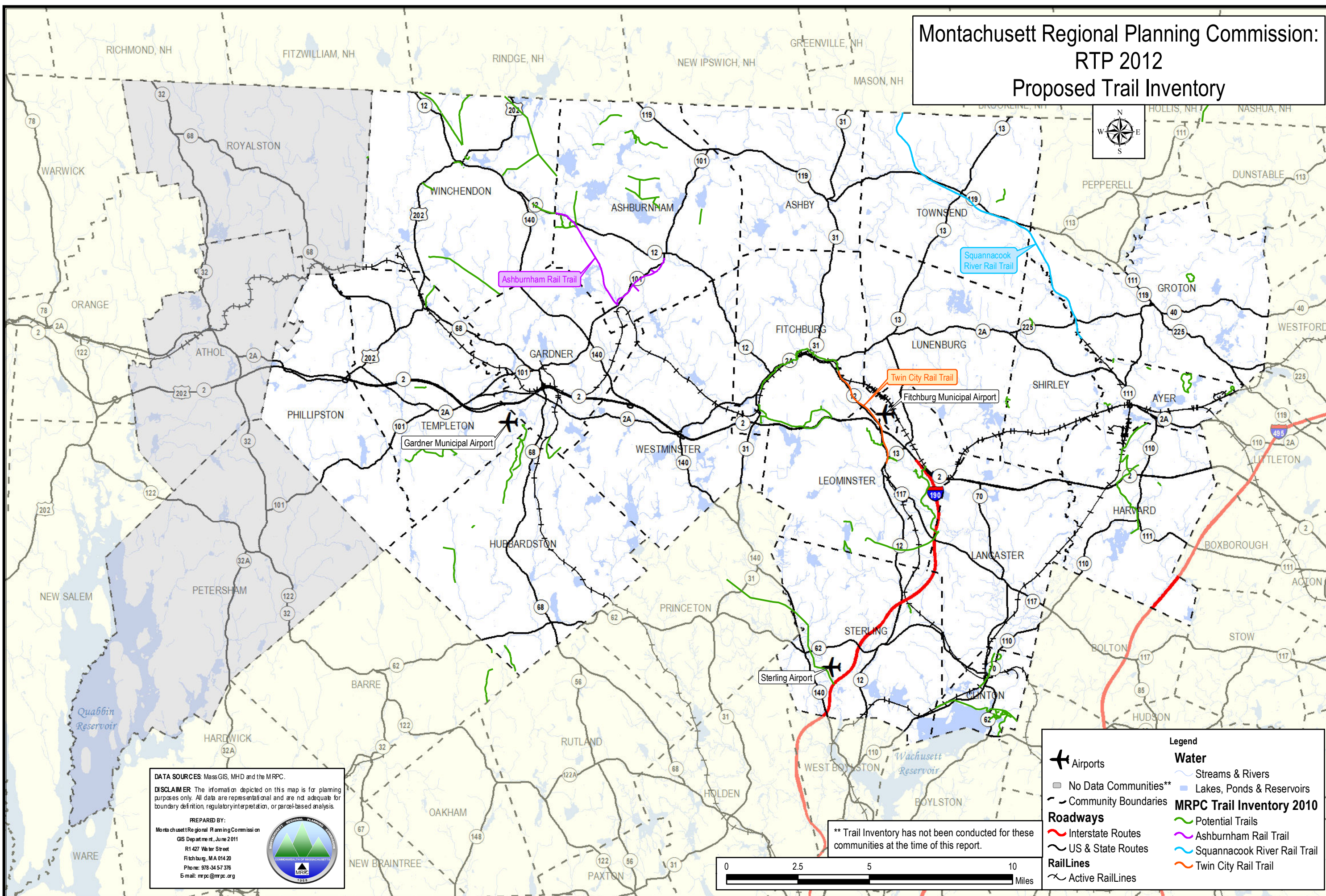
Water

- Streams & Rivers
- Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs

MRPC Trail Inventory 2010

- Existing Formal*
- Nashua River Rail Trail
- North Central Pathway
- Sterling Rail Trail


Montachusett Regional Planning Commission: RTP 2012 Proposed Trail Inventory



DATA SOURCES: MassGIS, MHD and the MRPC.

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Legend

Airports
✈ Airports

Water
— Streams & Rivers
■ Lakes, Ponds & Reservoirs

Community Boundaries
--- Community Boundaries

Roadways
— Interstate Routes
— US & State Routes

RailLines
— Active RailLines

MRPC Trail Inventory 2010
— Potential Trails
— Ashburnham Rail Trail
— Squannacook River Rail Trail
— Twin City Rail Trail

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