10 Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

2020 Regional Transportation Plan
10 Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycling and walking are integral components of the transportation system in Franklin County. While the continued development of the region-wide Franklin County Bikeway is a priority, there is a new emphasis on planning for bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities and identifying projects that make connections within communities. The further expansion of local bicycling and walking links is a focus of many of the new initiatives and funding opportunities that have begun since the 2016 Regional Transportation Plan.

The FRCOG assisted Franklin County communities in identifying bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects; proposing initiatives to promote healthy transportation options; and assessing potential improvements to incorporate bicycling, walking and complete streets into existing infrastructure projects. The FRCOG embraces the principles of complete streets in transportation planning, and has worked to help the towns of Franklin County understand complete streets and navigate the technical aspects of the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program. Complete Streets are designed and operated to enable safe access for all users including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and transit riders of all ages and abilities. They are safe for people to walk/bicycle to and from their destinations, and also allow buses to run more efficiently. The concept of Complete Streets reinforces a way of thinking about transportation planning, and routinely integrating alternative modes as part of the transportation system.

Currently, there is an increased emphasis in transportation planning on improving the built environment to support healthy communities. Safe access to places that encourage physical activity and healthy food are a priority. In addition, the development of transportation infrastructure to support the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions is essential. A number of state policies, directives, and partnerships have been implemented to support these priorities including the following:

- **The Healthy Transportation Compact** is an inter-agency initiative, including MassDOT, Health and Human Services, Energy and Environmental Affairs, and Public Health, designed to facilitate transportation decisions that balance the needs of all transportation users, expand mobility, improve public health, support a cleaner environment, and create stronger communities.
• MassDOT adopted a **Statewide Mode Shift Goal** of tripling the share of travel in Massachusetts by bicycling, transit and walking by 2030.

• The **Healthy Transportation Policy Directive** lays out specific transportation project planning and design requirements to ensure that healthy transportation modes, including walking, bicycling and taking transit, are considered equally as potential solutions.

• The **Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI)** is a regional collaboration of 13 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic jurisdictions that seeks to develop the clean energy economy, improve transportation, and reduce carbon emissions in the transportation sector. Massachusetts joined TCI in 2010, and recommitted to exploring joint solutions with its fellow states in November, 2017.

• The Massachusetts Legislature passed the **Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)** which set specific goals for state agencies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to achieve limits. The legislation is intended to assist the Commonwealth in achieving their adopted greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals.

The FRCOG works to incorporate the intent of these initiatives into regional transportation planning.

**Bicycle Facilities Planning**

**Statewide Planning Efforts**
In January 2019, a draft of the *Massachusetts Bicycle Transportation Plan Update* was released. The focus of the updated plan is creating connected networks of safe, comfortable, and convenient bikeways to enhance mobility, public health, environmental sustainability, and economic development opportunities. In a departure from the previous Statewide Bicycle Plan which focused on making long distance connections, this plan shifts attention to making short trips within communities safer and more viable. As part of the statewide bicycle planning process, *A Municipal Resource Guide for Bikeability* was also compiled to provide technical guidance to communities. The Resource Guide focuses on seven topics related to the planning, design, and maintenance of bikeable communities. The two documents represent MassDOT’s continued commitment to multi-modalism and then expansion of zero emission options statewide. The FRCOG participated in the development of the Statewide Bicycle Plan and the *Municipal Resource Guide for Bikeability* by providing Franklin County information.
Franklin Regional Bicycle Planning
The varied geography and topography of Franklin County pose challenges to the use of bicycles for transportation. The rural development patterns in some parts of the region mean that individuals may have to travel longer distances to work and to run routine daily errands. These challenges are considered when developing bicycle routes and facilities for the region. However, the region’s geographic conditions and scenic landscapes also contribute to the appeal of bicycling in Franklin County. There are many rural roads with low traffic volumes and picturesque rural landscapes. The FRCOG is committed to improving the bicycle facilities in the region and continues to look at new ways to enhance the atmosphere for bicycling. The FRCOG completed an update of the Franklin County Bikeway Plan in 2009, which outlines a network of bicycling routes throughout the region. An update to this plan will be compiled within the next five years.

Existing Bicycle Facilities

Franklin County Bikeway
The Franklin County Bikeway is a region-wide network of bike routes. Approximately 44-miles of the network had been constructed as either off road multi-use trails (approximately 5 miles) or on-road signed shared roadway routes (approximately 44 miles). There are an additional approximately 240 miles of shared roadway routes that are not currently signed, but are detailed on bikeway maps giving cyclists in the region suggested routes to reach their destinations. Both digital and paper maps are available. Plans to install Franklin County Bikeway wayfinding signs on these routes are underway. A map of the entire Franklin County Bikeway can be found at the end of this chapter.

The following are descriptions of the 44-miles of off-road and shared roadway facilities that are constructed and/or signed as bike routes in Franklin County.

The Riverside Greenway (Greenfield)
The Riverside Greenway is a 1-mile multi-use path located in the Town of Greenfield. Built on an abandoned road, this path connects a densely populated residential area with a heavily used public recreation facility. The path is owned and maintained by the Town of Greenfield and includes a bicycle and pedestrian bridge over the Green River.
Cyclists on the Riverside Greenway Bikepath in Greenfield

East Mineral Road Bridge (Montague and Erving)
The East Mineral Road Bridge was reconstructed for use as a bicycle and pedestrian bridge. The former vehicle bridge crosses the Millers River from East Mineral Road in Montague to River Road in Erving, and provides an important link in the Franklin County Bikeway network. It provides bicyclists and pedestrians access north and south without having to cross Route 2 at grade. Route 2 is a challenging route because of the high vehicle volumes and speeds.

The East Mineral Road Bridge

Canalside Trail (Deerfield and Montague)
The Canalside Trail is a 3.27-mile off-road multi-use path located in the Towns of Montague and Deerfield. It links the Connecticut River Great Falls Discovery Center and Unity Park in the Village of Turners Falls in Montague, to McClelland Farm Road, located off of River Road, in northeast Deerfield. The path travels next to the Connecticut River Canal in Turners Falls.
and along an abandoned rail corridor including a railroad bridge over the confluence of the Deerfield and Connecticut Rivers in Montague City and Deerfield. There is parking at each end of the Canalside Trail (in Turners Falls and in East Deerfield).

### The Canalside Trail Bikepath in Turners Falls

**Bicycle/Pedestrian Bridge on Greenfield Road**

Construction of the bicycle/pedestrian bridge on Greenfield Road was completed in the fall of 2017, and replaces a former vehicle bridge over the B&M Railroad that was removed. The bridge is on the Connecticut River Route, a shared roadway route that travels along the Connecticut River from Montague to Sunderland.

*A bicyclist traveling over the new Greenfield Road Bridge*
Canalside Trail Bike Path and Pedestrian Crossing Improvements on Montague City Road in Montague
The crossing of the Canalside Trail on Montague City Road at Solar Avenue and Depot Street in Montague was improved in 2016 to create a safer crossing of this high traffic road. The work included the construction and repair of sidewalks and wheelchair ramps, improved bus stops, pavement markings, signage, pavement narrowing for traffic calming and a flashing beacon to improve the bike path crossing.

Signed Shared Roadway Sections of the Franklin County Bikeway
The following Franklin County Bikeway shared roadway routes are marked with Franklin County Bikeway trailblazing signs.

- The Northfield Connector is a 14-mile route that links Montague and the East Mineral Road Bridge to the Northfield Mountain Recreation and Environmental Center, downtown Northfield, and inter-regional routes in New Hampshire. It travels along Millers Falls Road and East Mineral Road in Montague; River Road in Erving; and Pine Meadow Road, Millers Falls Road and Main Street in Northfield.
- The Greenfield-Montague Loop Route connects the Canalside Trail, the Northfield Connector, and the Riverside Greenway using local streets including McClelland Farm Road and River Road in Deerfield; Deerfield Street, Mill Street, River Street, Shelburne Road, Woodward Road, Colrain Street, Riverside Drive, Nash’s Mill Road, Leyden Road, Silver Street, Country Club Road, Log Plain Road, Lampblack Road, and Bascom Road in Greenfield; and Hoe Shop Road, West Gill Road and Main Road in Gill.
- The Connecticut River Route travels along the Connecticut River from Montague to Sunderland on Greenfield Road, Meadow Road and South Ferry Road in Montague, and Falls Road and North Main Street in Sunderland.
- The Leverett-Amherst Route travels from Millers Falls Road through Montague Center and Leverett Center to North Amherst. The route travels on Lake Pleasant Road, Montague Road, Old Northfield Road, Turners Falls Road, Main Street, School Street, Old Sunderland Road, Old Stage Road, and Gunn Road in Montague; Long Plain Road, Montague Road, Depot Road and Amherst Road in Leverett.

Proposed Future Bikeway Projects

Shared Roadway – Franklin County Bikeway Route Signs
The 2009 Franklin County Bikeway Plan Update identified additional shared roadway routes and potential off-road facilities throughout Franklin County. Planning work was completed to identify locations for the installation of Franklin County Bikeway logo signs on these routes,
expanding the number of trailblazed miles to approximately 240. The next step is to secure funding to fabricate and install the signs.

The Franklin County Bikeway Logo

**Schell Bridge Replacement (Northfield)**

This project will remove the existing deteriorated bridge structure, which is currently closed, and replace it with a new multi-span bicycle-pedestrian bridge over the Connecticut River in Northfield. The bridge is currently in preliminary design and construction is estimated for 2021-2022. It is a link in the Franklin County Bikeway, Connecticut River Scenic Byway and Bay State Greenway route networks, and one of a few crossings of the Connecticut River in the region.

A Rendering of the Proposed Schell Bridge Replacement
Millers River Greenway (Orange and Athol)

The development of a bikeway/greenway along the Millers River connecting Orange and Athol has been a desire of the two towns for many years. Since 2000, some conceptual planning work has been completed to identify options, but a final route has not been determined. Both off-road and on-road route options have been explored. The project received an earmark ($2 million) in the 2014 Massachusetts Transportation Bond. As a result, a series of meetings were held with stakeholders to revisit potential route layouts, and identify next steps. Originally envisioned as a link between the Orange Riverfront Park and the Millers River Environmental Park in Athol, public outreach has revealed an interest in expanding the concept to span from Phillipston to Greenfield with a spur to Wendell. The project is within an Environmental Justice area in downtown Orange.

Erving – Wendell Path

During the development of the Erving Master Plan (2002) and the public participation process for the Route 2 Safety Improvement Project, the lack of alternatives to bicycling on Route 2 in Erving was noted as a community concern. It was recognized that Route 2 is not recommended for bicyclists because it has a narrow and winding layout, lacks roadway shoulders in many locations, and has high traffic volumes and speeds. On two occasions (2002 and 2011), the FRCOG explored potential bicycle and pedestrian links in Erving other than Route 2 that could link the areas of Erving known as Farley and Ervingside to Erving Center. Routes in Erving Center included potential connections from Mountain Road to the east, and a route through the town-owned cemetery on Cemetery Road to Flagg Hill Road.

Old Farley Road in Wendell was identified as a potential off-road walking/bicycling route option. It is an existing dirt road that travels west from Arch Street in Erving Center approximately 2 miles and connects to Posk Place in Wendell. Much of this route travels on land within the Wendell State Forest, which is owned by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It terminates at Posk Place in Wendell near the New England National Scenic Trail hiking trail and a popular fishing location. In addition, there is another possible link to the east of Arch Street which is also within the Wendell State Forest that links to Sears Road and Wendell Depot Road. The project is within an Environmental Justice area.

Greenfield to Whately/South Deerfield

Route 5/10 is a popular travel and commuting corridor for bicyclists. There are businesses, attractions, and large regional employers located along the route that are destinations and
potential destinations for bicyclists. In addition, the Whately Park and Ride Lot that is serviced by FRTA and PVTA on Route 5/10 to the south in Whately. Over the years, interest in roadway improvements and/or the development of alternative routes to better accommodate bicycle travel from Greenfield to Deerfield and Whately has been expressed. Improvements along this route will better connect the Environmental Justice areas in Greenfield and northern Deerfield to South Deerfield and Whately.

**Improvements on Route 5/10**
There is a wide right-of-way in the southern section of Routes 5/10/116 in South Deerfield (from the Whately Park and Ride Lot at the intersection of Route 5/10/116 and Sunderland Road to the traffic light at the intersection of Route 5/10 and Conway Road Road) which allows for more flexibility in designing options for bicycle accommodation. The construction of an improved wide shoulder, separated bike lane or separate bike path are possible options for providing a more comfortable bicycling atmosphere in this section.

The northern section of Route 5/10 in Deerfield, from the intersection of Route 5/10 and Conway Road (Route 116) to Greenfield, has a narrower right-of-way. A separated bike lane was added on the section of Route 5/10 from just north of the intersection with Route 116 (Conway Road) to just south of the intersection with North Main Street/Mill Village Road. The roadway and shoulders narrow to the north of the separated bike lane, and while a separated bike lane may not be feasible but restriping or shoulder widening to better accommodate bicycles may be an option.

**Route 5/10 Bypass**
As an alternative to bicycling on Route 5/10 in Deerfield, the Deerfield Master Plan (April 2000) recommended the construction of an off-road bike path to the south of the Cheapside Bridge and to the west of Route 5/10. The proposed route travels near the Deerfield River to Pine Hill Road (or Old Ferry Road which is an old 1732 county road), and would provide a connection for bicyclists into Historic Deerfield. There is currently a dirt road along a portion of this route that could potentially be improved as a bike trail. Further analysis of the feasibility of this route is needed to determine if an off-road bicycle path could be developed.

**Greenfield Meade Street Bike Path Connection**
The proposed Meade Street Bike Path provides an off road connection from River Street and Mill Street to Deerfield Street in Greenfield. This is an important link both within Greenfield and as part of the regional bikeway network. The path is close to downtown Greenfield, and offers a better connection to the Franklin County Bikeway by providing an alternative to traveling on the busy northern section of Deerfield Street (Route 5/10). The proposed bike path will improve the connection between neighborhoods, downtown, and the John W. Olver
Transit Center, which is the hub for public transit and passenger rail service. It will also link to a new on-street bicycle lane which is being built on River and Mill Streets with funding from the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program. This project is within an Environmental Justice area.

**Connections to New Hampshire and Vermont**

The FRCOG has worked to coordinate bicycle planning with neighboring New Hampshire and Vermont. Past projects have included the development of the Tri-State Connecticut River Scenic Byway Bikeway route and map (see further description below). Recent work to coordinate the bicycle connections has included the FRCOG staff’s participation in a planning effort in New Hampshire aimed at addressing challenges and opportunities along the approximately 21.5-mile stretch of the Ashuelot Rail Trail between Hinsdale and Keene, New Hampshire. This would better connect the southern Vermont and New Hampshire trails and bike routes to the Environmental Justice area in Northfield, Gill and Erving.

**Existing Bicycle Promotional and Advocacy Programs**

The FRCOG works to encourage bicycling for transportation and recreational purposes to Franklin County residents and visitors. A number of initiatives and completed projects educate the public about bicycling in the region, and enhance the experience. The FRCOG continues to develop promotional materials and programs to educate the public about the existing facilities and encourage bicycling instead of driving. A number of maps and informational resources have been developed. In addition, the FRCOG is working to develop a bicycle tourism promotional campaign which is detailed in this section.

**Franklin County Bikeway Maps**

There are three Franklin County Bikeway route maps: the Western Franklin County Bikeway map, the Central Franklin County Bikeway map, and the Eastern Franklin County Bikeway map. The maps were most recently updated in 2018, and classify each route as novice, intermediate, or advanced in order to help bicyclists to determine the most suitable route to ride given their ability and physical fitness level. The maps also include information on the services available in the area, and elevation changes a rider will encounter. In addition to the paper maps, digital maps are available on the FRCOG’s website (www.frcog.org). These maps are intended for viewing on-line, and are not of a high enough resolution for large scale printing. Additionally, the bikeway route information can be viewed through Google Earth maps (the routes can be downloaded from the FRCOG website to be added to Google Earth).

**Tri-State Connecticut River Scenic Byway Bike Route Map**
As noted previously, a bicycle route map for the tri-state (Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont) area of the Connecticut River Scenic Byway was completed in 2014. The FRCOG worked jointly with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, the Southwest Region Planning Commission (in New Hampshire) and the Windham Regional Commission (in Vermont) to develop a print map, as well as on-line versions of the map that can be viewed in Google Earth (downloadable from www.frcog.org). This primarily on-road route connects Greenfield, Keene, NH, and Brattleboro, VT. Wayfinding signs were also installed along the routes.

**Interactive Bike Map**

The FRCOG is developing an interactive on-line bicycle tourism map. The map includes lodging, Amtrak Vermonter train stations, park and ride lots, Franklin County Bikeway routes, Tri-State Bikeway routes, photos along the bikeways, the Robert Frost Trail, locations of bike parking racks, the New England National Scenic Trail, Franklin Regional Transit Authority Bus routes, and the Scenic Byways. The on-line map link will be posted on the FRCOG website when it is complete.

**Bike and Recreation Promotional Project**

The FRCOG is developing and implementing a program to market Franklin County to bicycle tourists. During the past four years, work has been completed to define the backbone of a promotional program. Initially, meetings were held with advocates and stakeholders from the bicycling and tourism industries to gather input about current visitors to the area and ways to reach out to potential guests. Additionally, research was completed to gather information about other places that have developed bicycle tourism plans, and to create a list of best practices and examples. A list of bicycling events and resources in the greater Franklin County region was compiled in 2017. From that list of bicycling events, some statistics about the events and the participants was gathered and used to target outreach to potential tourists and support businesses. The participant information was particularly helpful in identifying the next steps of the project, which included launching the Bike Friendly Business Program.

During 2018, the FRCOG worked collaboratively with the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce to develop a recreational marketing program with a strong emphasis on recreational bicycling. This marketing program is still in development, but it is anticipated that it will be launched during 2019.

**Bike Friendly Business Program**
In 2018, the FRCOG launched a Bike Friendly Business Program. The goal of the program is to recognize and market Franklin County businesses that welcome and support the bicycling community. The FRCOG sent a mailing to 300 businesses with information about the program and the positive reasons to become a bicycle friendly establishment. Bike friendly businesses provide amenities that support bicycling and can draw cyclists to their establishments such amenities include bike parking, water and restrooms, repair stations, snacks, bike rentals and more. By providing these amenities these participating businesses can enroll in the program and are included in Bike Friendly Business promotional materials, and receive a window logo to display that shows their participation. Work to roll out the program will continue in 2019.

Bike Week Breakfast Event

The FRCOG regularly participates in Bay State Bike Week activities during the month of May by hosting a breakfast for bicyclists. The annual event is a great occasion to get together with the bicycling community, and to provide an opportunity for local bicyclists to network with one another. The event also gives FRCOG staff an opportunity to receive input about the current bicycle infrastructure, and desired improvements. In addition, participants have the opportunity to learn how to load bikes onto FRTA buses, and to check out the new FRTA low floor accessible bus.

Off Road Bike Network

The FRCOG is working to support mountain biking networks in Franklin County. In particular, during 2019 the FRCOG submitted a joint application with PVPC and BRPC to the MassTrails program for funding to create maps and other resources to promote the mountain biking trail networks in western Franklin County. This mapping task is intended to serve as a pilot to determine the best process for completing additional mapping of the mountain biking trail network in western Massachusetts in the future. The project scope also included gathering
information on the existing connections and gaps in order to plan a comprehensive mountain biking trail network. In addition, the scope includes researching best practices and lessons learned from other places in the country that have marketed their areas as mountain biking destinations.

**Bicycle Safety Campaign**

Bicycle safety is a concern. In 2015, the FRCOG researched bike safety campaigns from across the country to get ideas for developing a Franklin County bicycle safety campaign. A number of powerful and well defined campaigns were identified. The FRCOG launched a bicycle safety campaign to educate motorists and bicyclists about the rules of the road and to share the road in May 2019.

**Bikes on Buses and Rail**

All Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) and Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) buses that operate in Franklin County are equipped to carry bicycles. This allows commuters to travel a portion of their trip by bus and a portion by bicycle. Additionally, the Amtrak Vermonter train service carries bicycles. A reservation with Amtrak for the bicycle is required and there is limited capacity. Future public transportation system expansions, as well as the future development of regional rail services through the region, should include space for carrying more bicycles in order to encourage the use of bicycles as a viable form of transportation.

**Bicycle Parking and Other Amenities**

The FRCOG encourages the installation of additional bicycle parking in order to make bicycling convenient. In 2017, the FRCOG completed a bicycle parking purchase program, and provided bicycle parking racks to communities in Franklin County free of charge. Through this project, the FRCOG purchased 54 bike racks for 11 towns and 3 school districts including Greenfield Community College (GCC).

The FRCOG also encourages the installation of other bicycle related amenities such as bicycle repair stations and pumps in convenient locations throughout Franklin County. The FRCOG installed a bicycle repair station at GCC and will be giving three bicycle repairs stations to towns to be installed in the spring of 2019 in locations across the county.

**Bike Share**

During 2015 a bike share program feasibility study was completed. This plan examined options for implementing a bike share program in Greenfield and the possible locations
where docking stations could be located. There is currently a renewed interest in the implementation of a bike share program in Greenfield, and work is underway to determine the best approach establishing one.

**Pedestrian Facilities Planning Efforts**

**Massachusetts Statewide Pedestrian Plan**

In 2018, MassDOT completed a Statewide Pedestrian Plan. The Plan recommends policies, programs, and projects to guide MassDOT’s decision making and capital investments in pedestrian infrastructure. The Plan is also intended to provide direction to municipalities to improve walkability in local communities. The Plan recognizes the importance of walking as a part of daily life, and defines a vision for Massachusetts in which all people have a safe and comfortable walking option for short trips. A focus of the Plan is to reduce the demand for new vehicle trips, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote public health, and support economic development. It acknowledges that when pedestrian facilities, such as sidewalks, ramps, and crosswalks, are absent, poorly maintained, or unsafe, it puts people in danger, encourages trips in cars that could reasonably be made on foot, or limits mobility altogether. MassDOT also recognizes the importance of pedestrian safety and commits to working towards eliminating all pedestrian deaths in the Commonwealth. The Plan also outlines how MassDOT will support its municipal partners in their efforts to improve walkability. There is a companion document to the Plan, the Municipal Resource Guide for Walkability, which is intended to help towns improve their walking infrastructure.

**Franklin County Pedestrian Planning**

The focus of pedestrian planning in Franklin County continues to be on identifying walking connections and planning for infrastructure improvements such as sidewalks, safe crosswalks, and connections to shops, services, and residences whenever possible. While the FRCOG recognizes that there are challenges to walking and planning for walkable communities within a rural region, there are many opportunities to implement solutions that make the infrastructure safer and easier to walk. It is particularly important to identify improvements that can be incorporated into larger road projects. The FRCOG has focused on planning for complete streets as a way to identify pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements that can be added to other constructions projects.

The FRCOG completed a Regional Pedestrian Plan in 2010 and was the first regional pedestrian plan developed for Franklin County. In recent years, the FRCOG’s pedestrian
planning work has been on the local level, and has looked at many locations to identify needed improvements and ways to enhance connections.

**Existing Pedestrian Facilities**

**Recently Completed Pedestrian Improvements**

**Greenfield Intersection Improvements at Route 5/10 and Cheapside Street**
The intersection of Route 5/10 and Cheapside Street was poorly aligned, confusing to motorists, and had several safety issues. Pedestrian accommodations and sight distance were poor. The project realigned the intersection and added needed turn lanes to improve traffic flow and safety. Improved pedestrian access was included as part of the project.

**Montague Pedestrian Crossing Improvements on Montague City Road**
The crossing of the Canalside Trail on Montague City Road at Solar Avenue and Depot Street in Montague was improved in 2016. The work included the construction and repair of sidewalks and wheelchair ramps, as well as improvements at the FRTA bus stop and the installation of a flashing beacon at the crossing.

**Sunderland Complete Streets Improvements**
Sunderland participated in the Massachusetts Complete Streets Funding Program. As part of the program, the FRCOG helped Sunderland to compile a Prioritization Plan and successfully applied for funding. During 2018, Sunderland constructed a sidewalk on Garage Road and North Silver Lane, installed new crosswalks and a bus stop on Old Amherst Road, constructed a sidewalk on River Road, reconstructed the sidewalk on South Main Street, and created a multi-use path connection to the Elementary School with funding awarded through the program.

![The new Sidewalk on North Silver Lane in Sunderland](image-url)
Future Pedestrian Infrastructure Improvements

There are several pedestrian infrastructure projects in the region that are in various stages of planning and design. The following are brief descriptions of these projects.

Buckland Conway Street, South Street and Conway Road
The Conway Street, South Street and Conway Road reconstruction project in Buckland includes 1,100 feet of sidewalk reconstruction to achieve ADA compliance. It is currently in design and scheduled for construction in 2022.

Buckland North Street and Route 112 Connection to Mohawk Regional School and the Buckland Recreation Area
A sidewalk is needed on Route 112 and North Street to connect Shelburne Falls to the Mohawk Regional School and the town recreation area. There are frequently pedestrians walking in the shoulder on this busy road. The town of Buckland has requested improvements on Route 112 from North Street to Mohawk Trail Regional High School, and the Buckland Recreation Area, to better accommodate pedestrians. A sidewalk is desired, but because of issues related to winter maintenance, MassDOT is designing a shoulder widening project to accommodate both pedestrians and bicycles. There are continued concerns that a wide shoulder is not the best option for providing pedestrian accommodation, and the FRCOG will continue discussions throughout project development to design a project that all support.

Charlemont Roadway Reconstruction and Village Traffic Calming Project
Pedestrian infrastructure improvements on Route 2 in Charlemont center are included as part of a 0.9 mile roadway reconstruction project that begins approximately 600 feet west of where Route 8A crosses the Deerfield River and ends just east of South Street. The project is designed and scheduled to be constructed beginning in 2019. It includes roadway and sidewalk reconstruction work, and the construction of various traffic calming measures in the Charlemont village center. All existing sidewalks and curb-cut ramps will be reconstructed to achieve accessibility compliance. The project also includes bicycle accommodation. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

Colrain Center Intersection Improvements
This project will reconstruct the three-legged intersection of Main Road, Jacksonville Road and Greenfield Road in Colrain village center. It is intended to improve sight distance and pedestrian accommodation, and includes reconstructing the intersection and its approaches from 0.1 mile north and south, and 0.5 mile west to the town offices. It also includes creating an accessible network of sidewalks, ramps, and crosswalks to link popular village center locations. The project will include approx. 0.5 mile of new sidewalk, with landscaping
and streetscape elements to promote pedestrian mobility in the village. Construction is anticipated in 2020. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Ervingside Streetscape Improvements**
The Ervingside Streetscape Improvement Project was awarded funding from the National Scenic Byway Program to complete the design and construction of sidewalk and streetscape improvements along the Connecticut River Scenic Byway (Route 63) in Erving. It is intended to improve pedestrian access and safety on a one mile section of Route 63 in Erving, and spans from the north side of the bridge over the Millers River on Bridge Street (at the Erving/Montague town border) to the Erving Senior center. The project area is just over one mile long, and includes the Erving section of Millers Falls and the adjacent residential neighborhood known as Ervingside. The design is completed and the construction is scheduled to start during 2019. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Deerfield – Whately Route 5/10 Reconstruction**
Work for the Routes 5/10 resurfacing project in Whately and Deerfield will also include new sidewalks, crosswalks and pedestrian signals at Elm Street. The work will include a short section of Route 5/10 south of the Route 5/10 overpass near Interstate 91 Exit 24, near the Whately Diner. To the north, work will be completed from the I-91 overpass at the intersection of Route 5/10 and Route 116 (Sunderland Road) to just north of the intersection of Route 5/10 and Route 116 (Conway Road). Sidewalks will be constructed along the west side of Route 5/10 between the Whately/Deerfield town line and Elm Street, and on the east side of Route 5/10 between Elm Street and Conway Road (Route 116). The cross-section for the 0.2-mile segment of Route 5 south of I-91 will consist of two 12-foot travel lanes and 6- to 9-foot shoulders. This project is scheduled for construction in 2020.

**Greenfield Montague City Road**
This project is a mile long. It is from the previously completed Cheapside Intersection Project to the General Pierce Bridge. The project will consist of new sidewalks constructed on both sides of the road where possible, with new/improved crossings. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Greenfield Route 2 West of the Rotary**
During the public input sessions for the Regional Transportation Plan the lack of sidewalk on the south side of Route 2 to the west of the Greenfield rotary was noted as a concern for pedestrians. There are a number of large scale commercial establishments along this road and there are employees who walk to work. There is currently a MassDOT traffic signal and intersection improvement project at two locations in this area: the intersections of Route 2 and Colrain Road and Route 2 at the Big Y entrance. The project also includes new
sidewalks and wheelchair ramps, and is currently in design and scheduled for construction in 2022. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Greenfield Turners Falls Road**

Turners Falls Road in Greenfield is a steep winding hill that descends from east Greenfield into the village of Turners Falls in Montague via the White Bridge. The route is frequently traveled by pedestrians and bicyclists, but it does not have a sidewalk or a lane/shoulder to accommodate bicycles. On the west side of Turners Falls Road, there is a steep incline with rock outcroppings. On the east side of the road, there is a steep drop down a large hill to the Connecticut River. On numerous occasions concerns over the frequent and regular use of this route (Turners Falls Road and Loomis Road) by pedestrians and the lack of infrastructure was expressed to the FRCOG.

Turners Falls Road links to 5th Street and Canal Street in Turners Falls. It is also a link to the Canalside Trail Bikepath. This route is an important gateway to Turners Falls and connects two large low income and minority areas. The route has a high volume of vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle traffic. The FRCOG examined this route as part of Complete Streets assessment work and provided recommendations for better pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. The deteriorated condition of the sidewalks and curbing on the White Bridge and the Canal Bridge are also of concern along this route. The pedestrian section of the Bridge is closed, and has forced pedestrians using this route to walk in the road. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Greenfield Leyden Road**

Leyden Road is a frequently used walking route that does not have sidewalks on the 1 mile section from Nash’s Mill Road to Leyden Woods Road. It is a main route from Leyden Woods, a densely populated housing complex, into downtown Greenfield, and it intersects
with Nash’s Mill Road within a ½ mile of the Greenfield Swimming and Recreation Area and the terminus of the Riverside Greenway Bike Path. Additionally, there are densely developed residential neighborhoods, including an affordable housing development on Leyden Road and the surrounding area. This area is also an identified low income and minority area in Franklin County. Leyden Road is served by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority’s (FRTA) Route 21 Greenfield Community Route bus. The lack of a sidewalk on this route was the focus of many comments received during public outreach. Installation of a sidewalk is a top priority; however, design needs to be completed and is not currently underway. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Greenfield Wisdom Way**
This project consists of reconstruction of 0.43 miles of Wisdom Way in Greenfield, from 480 feet east of Petty Plain Road to Mill Street. It consists of reconstruction of retaining walls, drainage repairs, new wheelchair ramps, sidewalk reconstruction, pavement markings, signage, and a new 10-foot wide shared use path along the side of the road. It is projected for construction during 2024. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Northfield Streetscape and Safety Improvements Phase II**
Phase II of the Northfield Main Street (Route 10/63) Improvement Project involves intersection and pedestrian safety improvements in the center of town. The work will include replacement of raised medians, and relocation of flashing traffic signals; various crosswalk upgrades; new sidewalk construction; and other incidental work. The length of the project is approximately 2.65 miles, beginning at the intersection of Route 10 and Route 63 and extending to Moody Street. Design has not yet commenced. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Orange North Main Street**
This project will reconstruct the road and repair drainage and retaining walls along a ½ mile section of North Main Street in downtown Orange. As part of this project, ADA accessible sidewalks will be constructed along with traffic signing, landscaping, and streetscape improvements. The project begins on North Main Street at the School Street intersection and ends at the intersection of Lincoln Avenue, a distance of approximately 0.4 miles. Construction is scheduled for 2023. The remainder of North Main Street to the Fisher Hill and Dexter Park Schools is in poor condition with roadway and sidewalk improvements needed. North Main Street connects the commercial downtown to the residential neighborhoods, and is generally walkable if the infrastructure is improved. Pedestrian improvements are important to this area. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Orange East Main Street**
East Main Street (Route 2A) is a main travel route from downtown Orange to Athol. It is a commercially oriented business area with many of the businesses being automobile oriented in their design and access layout. However, East Main Street is also an important route for pedestrians and bicyclists. It is a key connection to essential services for the population of this area. It is within walking distance of many residential areas and is also part of the FRTA Greenfield/Orange bus route (Route 32). This area was examined for complete streets opportunities, and the construction of sidewalks, highly visible crosswalks and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant curb-ramps were recommended. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Orange East Water Street**
Water Street in downtown Orange links South Main Street to East Main Street. This route travels near Memorial Park, Rodney Hunt Manufacturing, the Orange District Court and FRTA transit stop. This route is an important walking link within the downtown area of Orange. Recommendations to better accommodate pedestrians and bicycles include constructing sidewalks, relocating obstructions in the sidewalks, and painting all crosswalks to be more visible. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**Orange West River Street**
West River Street in Orange is located south of the intersection of North, South, East and West Main Streets (Route 2A and Route 122) in downtown Orange. West River Street is on the south side of the Millers River. The post office is at the corner of South Main Street and West River Street, and is an area with low income and minority populations. Recommendations for improvements include realigning the road and narrowing the travel lanes to allow room for bike lanes and wide sidewalks. Improvements at the intersection of West River and South Main Street are recommended to improve the crosswalk and to shorten the crossing distance for pedestrians by installing a curb extension. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**South Deerfield Streetscape Improvements**
South Deerfield village center is a pedestrian friendly area. A number of streetscape design elements have been conceptually developed. The 2013 Downtown Deerfield Complete Streets and Livability Plan outlined some potential improvements to make the area more pedestrian and bicycle friendly, such as completing a pavement marking plan that accommodates bikes and pedestrian, designating Sugarloaf and Elm Streets as part of the Franklin County Bikeway, and installing landscaping barrels to slow traffic. Sidewalk ramps and crosswalks need to be improved in the area near the intersection of Sugarloaf Street, Elm Street, South Main Street and North Main Street.

**Sunderland North Main Street**
This project will consist of box-widening and resurfacing North Main Street from the Route 116/47 intersection to Claybrook Drive. It will also include sidewalk reconstruction, new wheelchair ramps, drainage system replacement and new pavement markings and signage. This project is anticipated to be constructed in 2020. The project is in an Environmental Justice area.

**State Policies and Programs**

**Mass in Motion - 1422**

Since 2012, the FRCOG has coordinated the Mass in Motion initiative for Franklin County. Mass in Motion is a statewide initiative to promote healthy eating and active living in the places people live, learn, work and play. The goal of the Franklin County Mass in Motion program is to increase physical activities and improve the nutrition of Franklin County and North Quabbin residents.

As part of the Franklin County Mass in Motion project, from July 2015 through September 2018, the planning staff of the FRCOG completed five tasks with funding from the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) 1422 Grant Program as an extension of the Franklin County Mass in Motion Program. These tasks are part of the built environment component of the 1422 Grant to the Franklin County Mass in Motion Program that are intended to help communities improve walking networks, and promote walking for health and everyday transportation. The CDC's 1422 Grant Program supported efforts nationwide to reduce the risk factors associated with childhood and adult obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. The goal is to make healthy living easier for all Americans.

The tasks that were completed included:

- Mapped the Environmental Justice (EJ) areas in Franklin County and identified walking routes to destinations in and near these areas. EJ areas are defined as those with high concentrations of minorities and/or low income households. Additionally, special attention was paid to identifying the locations of retail establishments in the EJ areas that sell fresh fruits and vegetables.

- Assessed the walkability of routes to fresh fruits and vegetables within five of the EJ areas. Compiled the findings into a report, and outlined the recommended improvements. The five areas that were assessed were chosen based on the recommendations of the FRCOG transportation planning staff with input from the Mass in Motion Steering Committee.
• Updated, reprinted and redistributed the Walk Franklin County Maps based on input from seniors and other potential users of the maps.
• Installed walking wayfinding signs in Turners Falls and Orange.
• Gathered information about trail connections within towns in order to create maps of potential utilitarian walking maps. Drafted maps of trail resources for each town.
• Completed pedestrian counts in Turners Falls for four years as part of a mode shift data collection process.
• Coordinated and facilitated walk audit trainings with seniors in Northfield, Shelburne Falls and South Deerfield.
• Provided information to Towns about the Complete Streets Funding Program and provided assistance to the Towns interested in participating.

While the Mass in Motion 1422 funding ended, this project helped to enhance the interactions between the groups who are involved with Mass in Motion and to encourage utilitarian walking.

American’s with Disability Act (ADA) Transition Plans
The American’s with Disability Act (ADA) requires communities to complete self-evaluations to identify barriers in programs and activities that prevents persons with disabilities from access. An ADA Transition Plan sets forth steps necessary to complete modifications identified through self-evaluation, and provide a schedule for completing modifications. The FRCOG has assisted towns in Franklin County to compile an ADA Transition Plan. The sidewalk and pedestrian infrastructure is among the public facilities that are evaluated for compliance with accessibility requirements. It outlines a community’s commitment to systematically addressing barriers to accessibility.

Ongoing Activities with Both Bicycle and Pedestrian Components

Complete Streets at Bus Stops

During 2017, the FRCOG completed a project to examine four Franklin Regional Transit Authority (FRTA) bus stops for compliance with the principles of Complete Streets. Transit is an important component of a multimodal system and livable community. Most trips using transit begin or end with a walk or bicycle ride. Therefore, improving the road condition for all modes of transportation near bus stops is essential to providing better services. The goal of this project was to assess four bus stop locations in Franklin County and identify potential complete streets improvements that could improve the first and last mile experience. The bus stops that were assessed were selected with input from the FRTA staff. The intention
was to provide recommendations to make the first and last mile experience more comfortable and safe for transit riders as they leave the bus and walk, bicycle or drive to other places. The bus stops on East River Street in Orange, Avenue A in Montague at the Carnegie Library/Food City, at Leyden Woods in Greenfield, and Elm Street at Elm Terrace in Greenfield were evaluated.

**Safe Routes to School Program**

The Massachusetts Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program is intended to encourage walking and bicycling to school by providing technical assistance and support to schools. It also provides an opportunity for schools that are enrolled in the program to receive assistance in assessing and improving infrastructure within two miles of their school. The program is a grassroots initiative where individual schools design their own activities. Since the completion of the In 2016 Regional Transportation Plan the number of schools enrolled in the SRTS program has increased from eight to thirteen. The schools that are enrolled include:

- Bernardston Elementary School, Bernardston
- Colrain Central School, Colrain
- Erving Elementary School, Erving
- Gill Elementary School, Gill
- Discover School at Four Corners, Greenfield
- Federal Street School, Greenfield
- Math and Science Academy, Greenfield
- Newton Street School, Greenfield
- Greenfield Middle School, Greenfield
- Hillcrest Elementary School, Montague
- Sheffield Elementary School, Montague
- Sunderland Elementary School, Sunderland
- Whately Elementary School, Whately

The FRCOG continues to encourage schools to enroll in the program and has also provided support to schools that have enrolled by assisting with walking assessments.

**Complete Streets Funding Program**

MassDOT launched the Complete Streets Funding Program on February 1, 2016. The program is intended to encourage municipalities to include complete streets design elements and infrastructure on locally-funded roads. The program provides technical
assistance and construction funding to eligible municipalities. To be eligible, towns must attend a training workshop, pass a complete streets policy, and compile a complete streets prioritization plan. Participating towns may apply for up to $50,000 in technical assistance to complete a 5-year complete streets prioritization plan, and up to $400,000 in project construction funding for projects.

The FRCOG has assisted the towns in Franklin County to participate in the program. There are currently nine communities that are taking part in the program. The towns of Buckland, Colrain, Erving, Greenfield, Montague, Orange, Sunderland, and Whately have passed complete streets policies. The town of Deerfield signed a letter of intent in May 2018 to adopt a policy within 1 year. The towns of Buckland, Greenfield, Montague, Sunderland, and Whately have compiled complete streets prioritization plans. Deerfield and Orange are currently compiling complete streets prioritization plans. Greenfield, Montague, Sunderland, and Whately were awarded funding to construct improvements, and Sunderland constructed most of their funded projects during the 2018 construction season.

Construction of a new sidewalk on South Main Street in Sunderland with funding from the Complete Streets Program

**Recommendations for Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

- Pursue funding to install Franklin County Bikeway Logo signs, on the remaining segments of the Franklin County Bikeway as outlined in the *Franklin County Bikeway Plan Update (2009).*
- Update and distribute Franklin County Bikeway Maps to help promote bicycling in Franklin County.
- Further identify and evaluate the viability of potential extensions of the Franklin County Bikeway and potential connections to other bicycle trails and paths in the greater regional area.
- Assist Towns interested in participating in the Complete Streets Funding Program.
- Support efforts to implement the design work for the Millers River Greenway in Orange and Athol.
- Pursue funding to complete preliminary design for the Erving-Wendell Bike Path.
- Improve roads for bicycle and pedestrian accommodation.
- Consider the issue of winter maintenance and snow removal from sidewalks and ramps.
- Include pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure improvements when appropriate into the scope of road construction projects.
- Continue to support and assist Franklin County schools in the Massachusetts Safe Routes to School Program.
- Work to improve the pedestrian network by filling in the gaps where sidewalks and crosswalks are needed and prioritize ADA compliance projects.
- Develop and implement a campaign to educate the public about safe pedestrian practices and promote walking as a transportation option.
- Improve the 5th Street gateway entrance to Turners Falls from Greenfield to better accommodate pedestrian flow and vehicle safety.
- Design and construct Meade Street Bikepath in Greenfield.
- Explore options for better lighting at crosswalks at night.
- Explore the creation of a dock-less Bike Share system.
- Explore options for improvements on Route 5/10 in Deerfield and Whately to make this route better for bicycles.
- Sidewalks are needed in the following locations:
  - On the south side of Route 116 in Sunderland from the Bridgeside Grill to the Northstar School.
  - On the west side of Route 2 in Greenfield to the east of the Home Depot
  - On Route 112 in Buckland for kids walking to the Mohawk Trail Regional School and to the Buckland Recreation Area.
Franklin County
Bikeway Network

Sources: Map produced by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Planning Department. GIS data sources include MassDOT, MassGIS and FRCOG. MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, InfoGroup, 2018. Depicted boundaries are approximate and are intended for planning purposes only, not to be used for survey.