

# Bike And Pedestrian Features

## What are the objectives of zoning for bike and pedestrian features?

To develop a regional network of pedestrian and bicycle trail systems to provide residents with viable travel alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle.



Bike lanes in Northampton

## Why do we need to encourage bike and pedestrian features in our community?

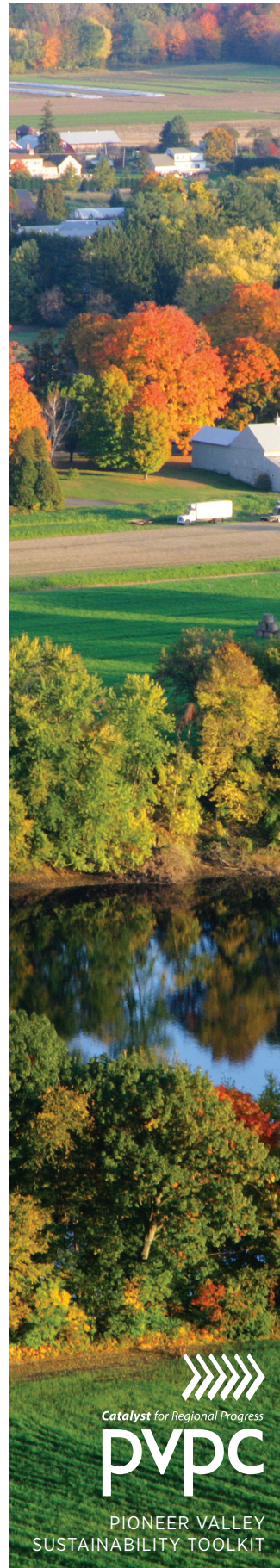
Walking and bicycling are important forms of transportation and recreation throughout Massachusetts. Unfortunately, the rate at which people are walking or biking to work has decreased in many communities since 1990. During this same period the number of people who are obese in Massachusetts increased significantly from 1990 to 2000 according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). These two trends are related, and creating a better built environment for walking and bicycling is a key element to rectifying this critical issue. As the costs of health care, energy, and transportation continue to escalate, walking and bicycling continue to be important solutions which require the support of policy, planning, and infrastructure.

### DID YOU KNOW...

That 79.3% of commuters in the Pioneer Valley drove alone to work. Only 0.3% bike to work, and 5% walk to work. (US Census, 2000)

## How does the zoning for bike and pedestrian features work?

Communities can adopt regulations and bylaws that promote pedestrian and bicycle



linkages, and to meet the following goals: 1) promoting the safety of pedestrian access, movement, and protection for the physically able, physically challenged, children or seniors within the community; 2) insuring that the ADA guidelines are met for all sidewalk or pathway installations, existing and proposed; 3) promoting attractive and well-constructed sidewalks or pathways that correspond to the character, aesthetic qualities, natural, environmental, and historical features of developing or existing neighborhoods; 4) connecting to existing and projected sidewalks or pathways whenever the opportunity arises to insure an interconnected pedestrian system; and 5) insuring that all development actively implements the building of sidewalks for new construction, reconstruction, or rehabilitation.

## EXAMPLES FROM THE PIONEER VALLEY

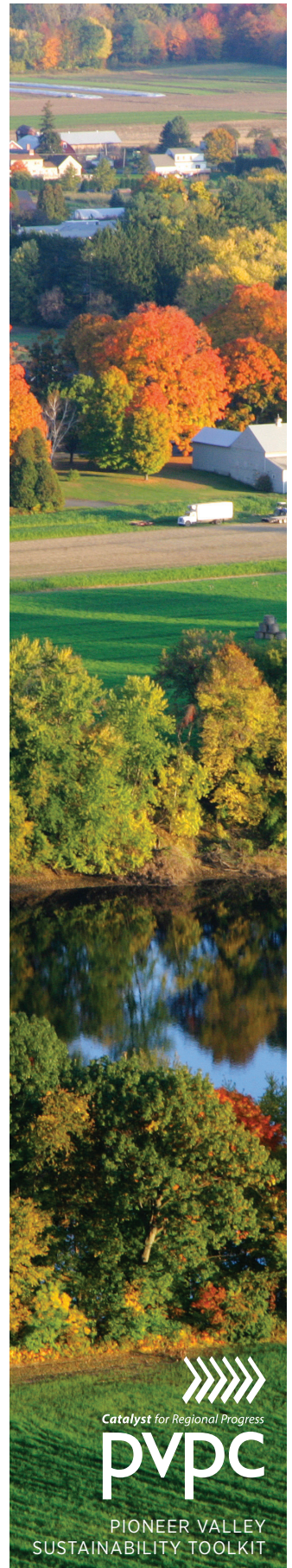
### Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway

The Connecticut Riverwalk and Bikeway was proposed by PVPC in 1995 as a regional pedestrian and bicycle path along the banks of the Connecticut River, connecting the communities of Springfield, Chicopee, Agawam, West Springfield and Holyoke. The Riverwalk creates a linear park along both sides of the Connecticut River, which when completed, will extend over 20 miles in total distance. It links residential neighborhoods with urban employment centers and riverfront parks and amenities. Two segments of the Riverwalk have now been constructed at a cost of \$5 million, and opened to the public, including a 3.7 mile segment in Springfield and a 2.1 mile segment in Agawam. Other segments are currently under design in Chicopee, Holyoke, West Springfield and Agawam.



### Southwick and Westfield Rail Trail

The Southwick Rail Trail and Columbia Greenway in Westfield are part of a regional bike system that will connect the Farmington River Greenway in Connecticut to the Rail Trail in Northampton. The 9.5-mile trail segment in Southwick and Westfield will provide residents access to a variety of natural and culturally significant resources. Southwick Bike Trail follows an abandoned rail line and runs from the Connecticut border north to the town of Westfield. The trail will pass through residential neighborhoods, protected agricultural lands, and the Congamond Lakes region. Currently, the design stage for the Southwick Rail Trail is completed and construction on this project is scheduled to begin



in spring 2008. The Columbia Greenway in Westfield is in the development stage, with construction also expected to begin in 2008. This greenway will run through the center of the city on an elevated rail bed, and provide a safe and easy route to the center of town for residents in surrounding neighborhoods.

**A model bylaw or strategy is included in the Pioneer Valley Sustainability Toolkit.**

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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