

Rural Walking Toolkit



MAKING MASSACHUSETTS MORE WALKABLE

WalkBoston works to make all MA communities more walkable

Walking should be safe and easy, because it leads to

- Better health for everyone
- A cleaner environment
- More vibrant communities

In all Massachusetts cities and towns

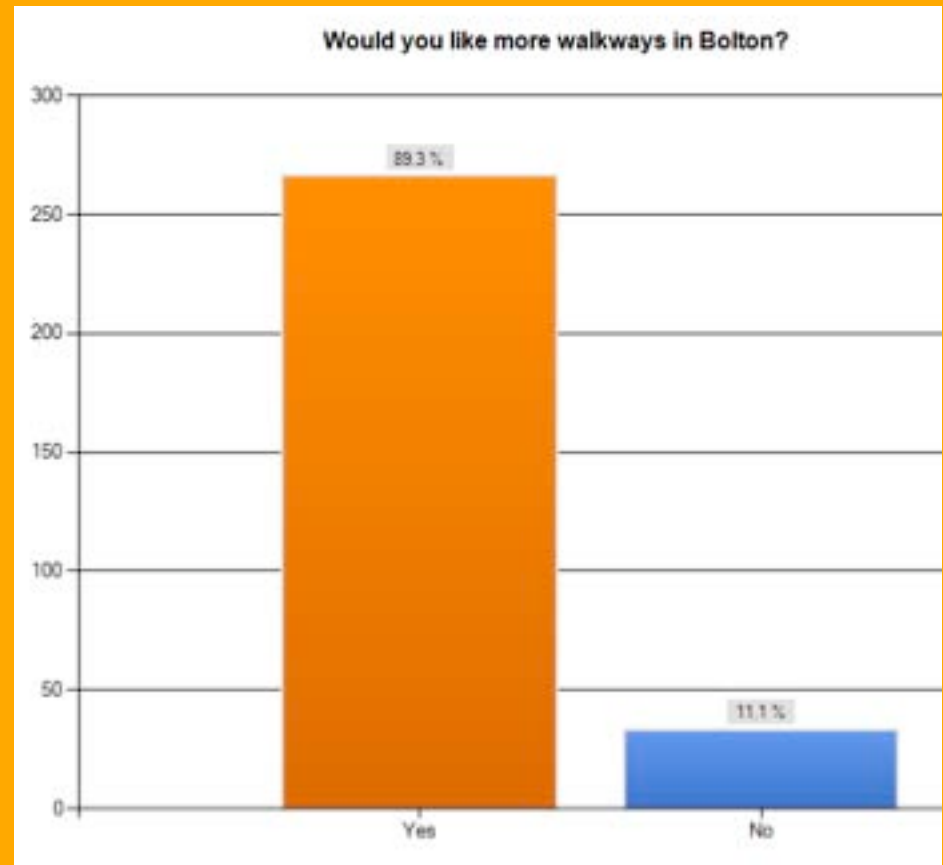
WalkBoston and rural walking

- Communities across the state have approached WalkBoston for advice on how to improve walking conditions
- DPH commissioned WalkBoston to develop recommendations to help rural and low-density communities increase walking opportunities

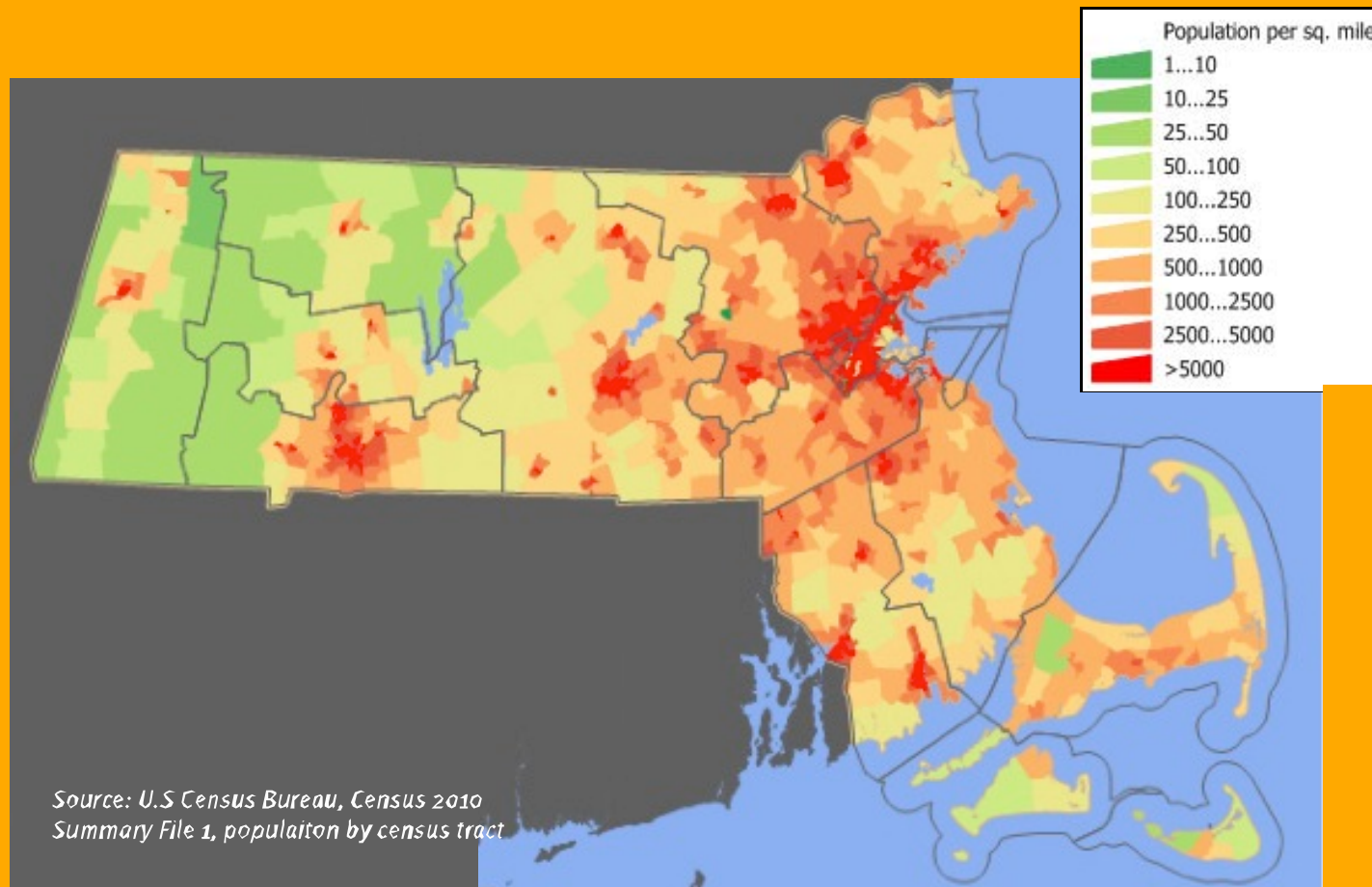
Enormous local support exists

Surveys show that residents want to both add walking routes and keep rural ambience

New walkways wanted by >50% of residents in Bolton, Norwell, Mashpee



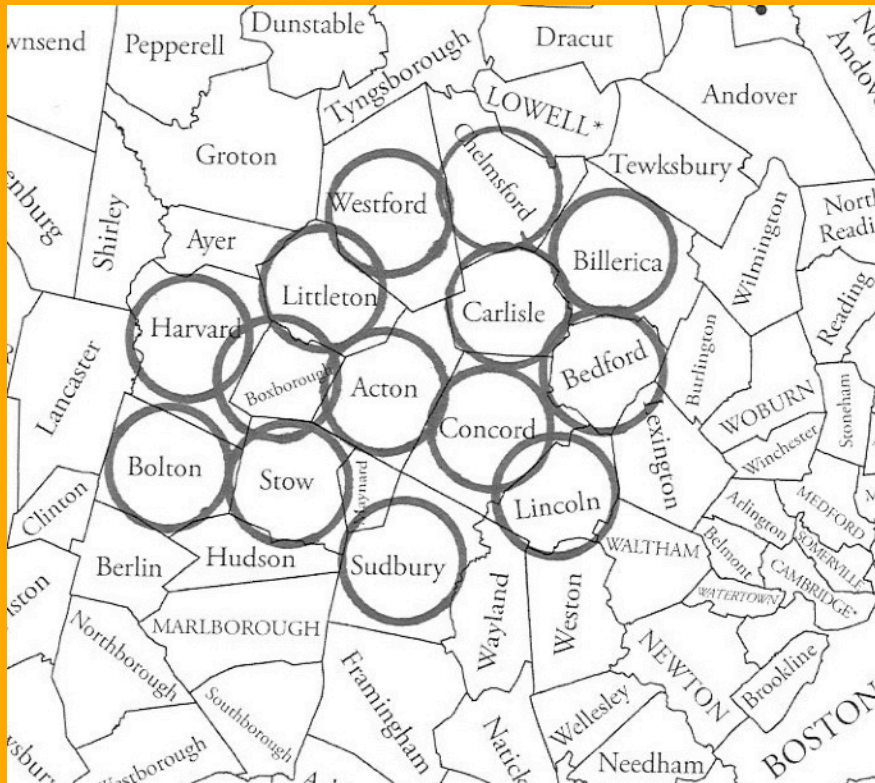
Rural lands still dominate MA



Rural definition: < 500 persons per square mile

Source: Center for Rural Massachusetts, UMass Amherst

We have a terrific history of walking



3-mile walking distance to town centers = 6-mile diameter

What are the options?

Types of rural walkways in MA



Sidewalk with curb

Types of walkways in rural MA



Roadside path

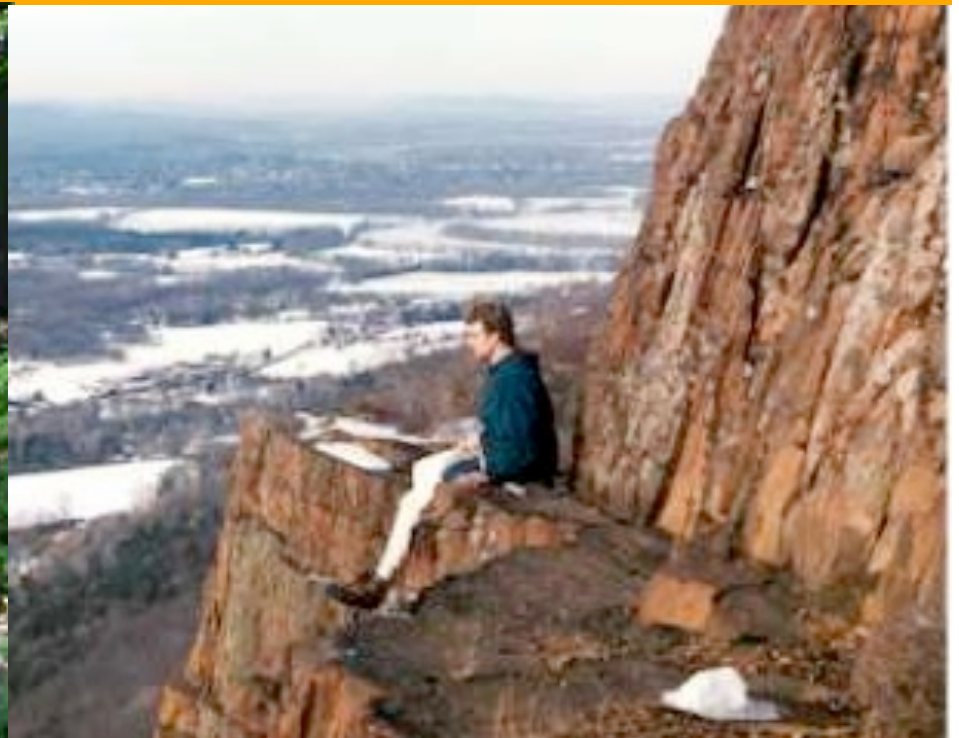


Meandering roadside path

Types of walkways in rural MA

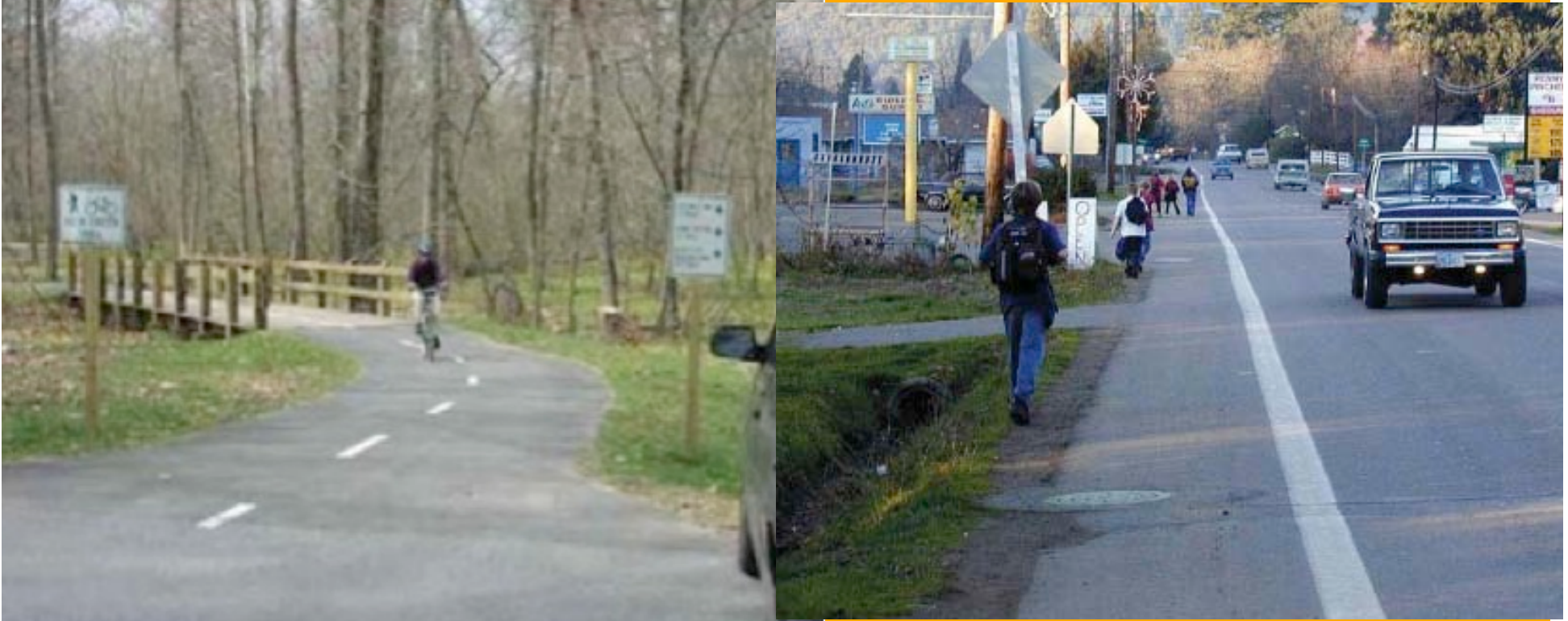


Local trail for hiking



Regional trail for hiking

Types of walkways in rural MA



Regional multi-use trail

Road shoulder hiking/biking

Typical challenges towns must face



Limited space for safe walking along roads

Too few walking routes

Long distances between destinations

Organizing the effort

Getting the word out

Safe designs are key

Emphasize safety where walkways meet and cross roads

Choose routes to avoid pedestrian-vehicle conflicts

Provide setbacks/buffer strips for roadside paths

Reduce vehicle speeds where possible

Legal options to get space for walkways

Land purchases and donations

Easements

A use of private property

Typically irrevocable

Almost always recorded

Conservation restrictions

Large private parcels with limits on uses

Typically irrevocable

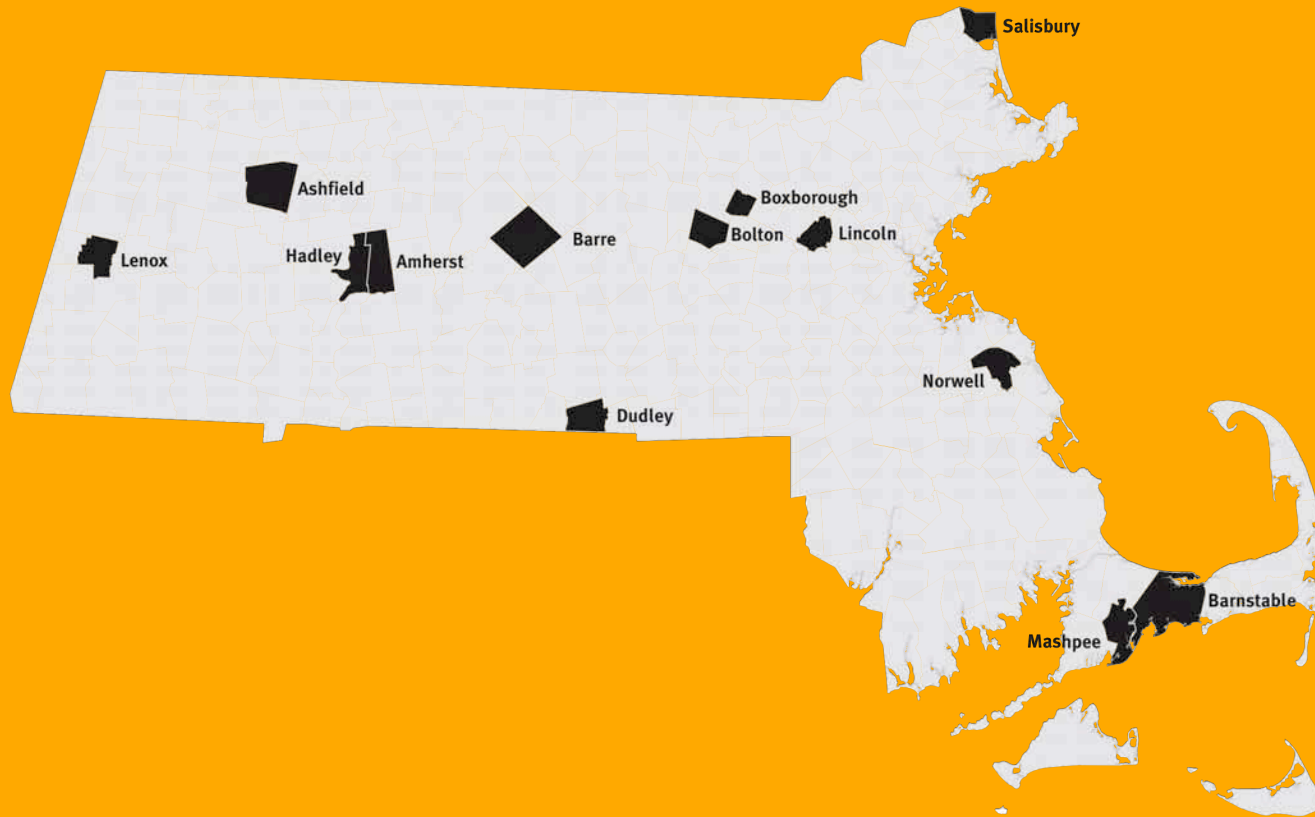
Always recorded

Licenses

Owner gives permission to use a property, retains control

Often revocable & limited in duration

Towns with good practices



WalkBoston studied 13 towns who found creative ways to make their communities more walkable

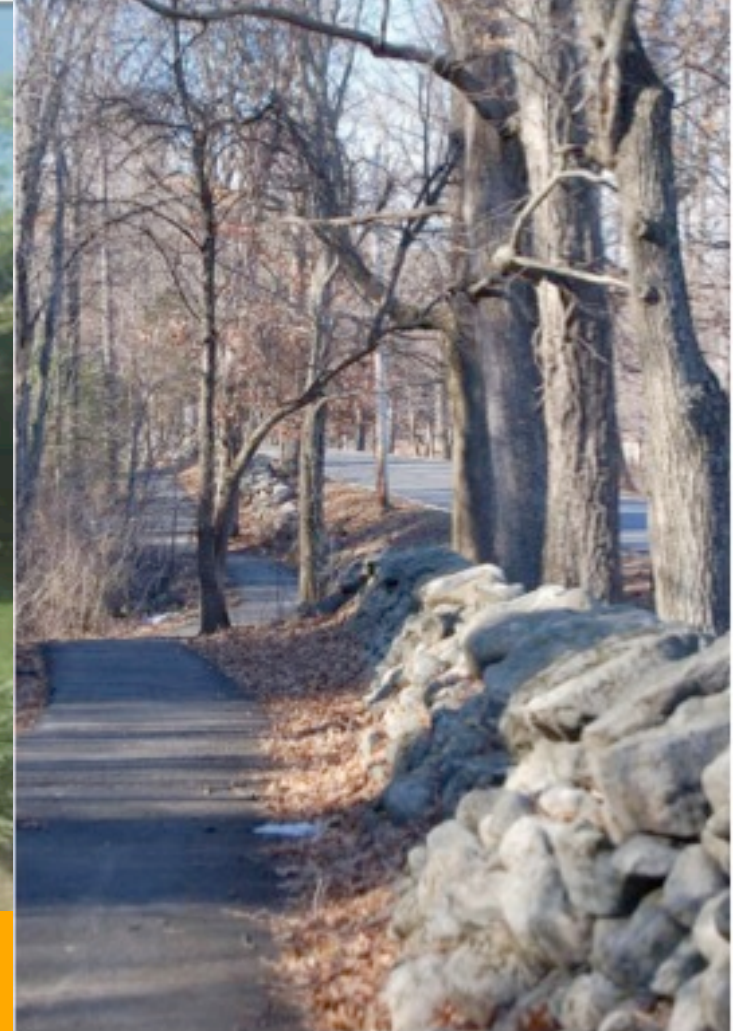
A wide variety of approaches have
been successful

Creative connections



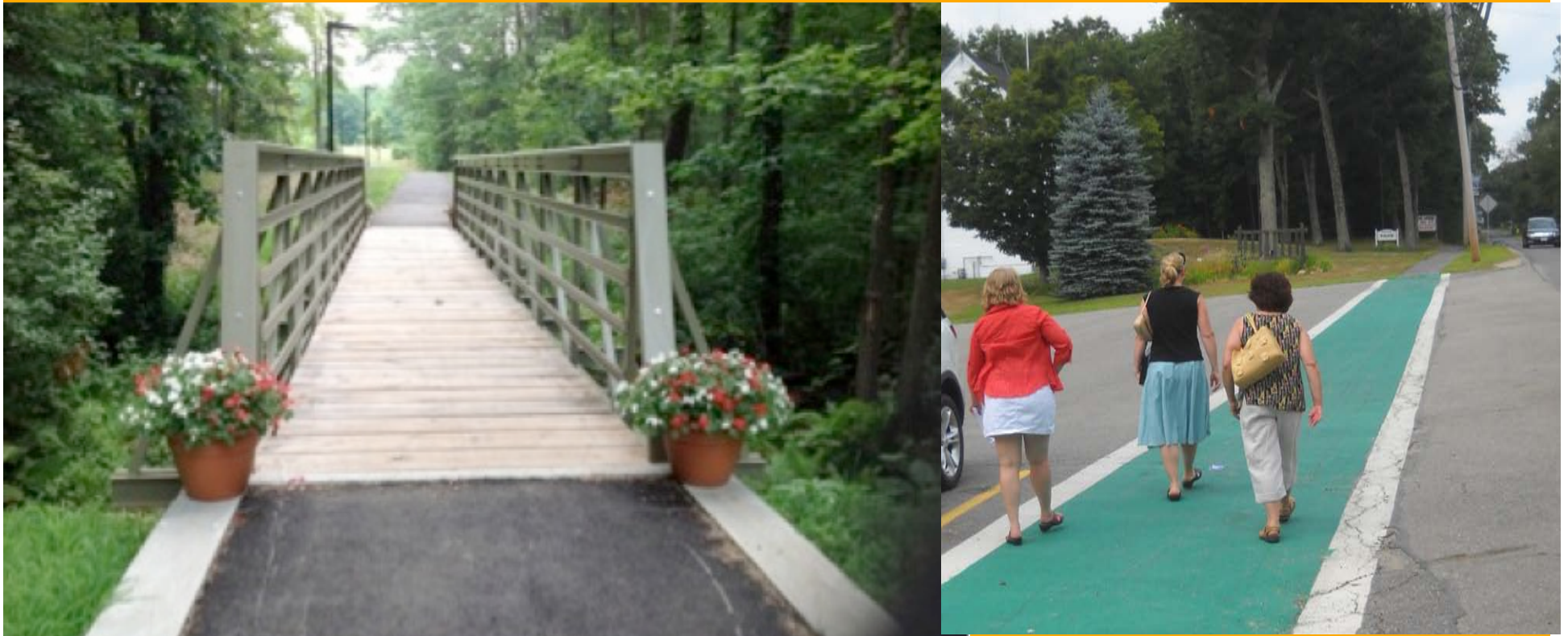
Boxborough's path connects all its public buildings

Creative alternative designs



Stone walls can hide walkways
Roadside paths can meander

Creative use of local resources



Boxborough's library construction funding helped build a walkway & purchase a \$25,000 fiberglass bridge kit and entice a professional civil engineer and 18 volunteers to build it. The town also used \$400 worth of paint to delineate a roadside path.

Creative use of local & state resources



Traffic calming in Barre's town center includes removal of excess pavement and addition of neckdowns

Dudley's traffic calming plan includes raised crosswalks between the 2 parts of a local college campus

Creative use of local & state resources



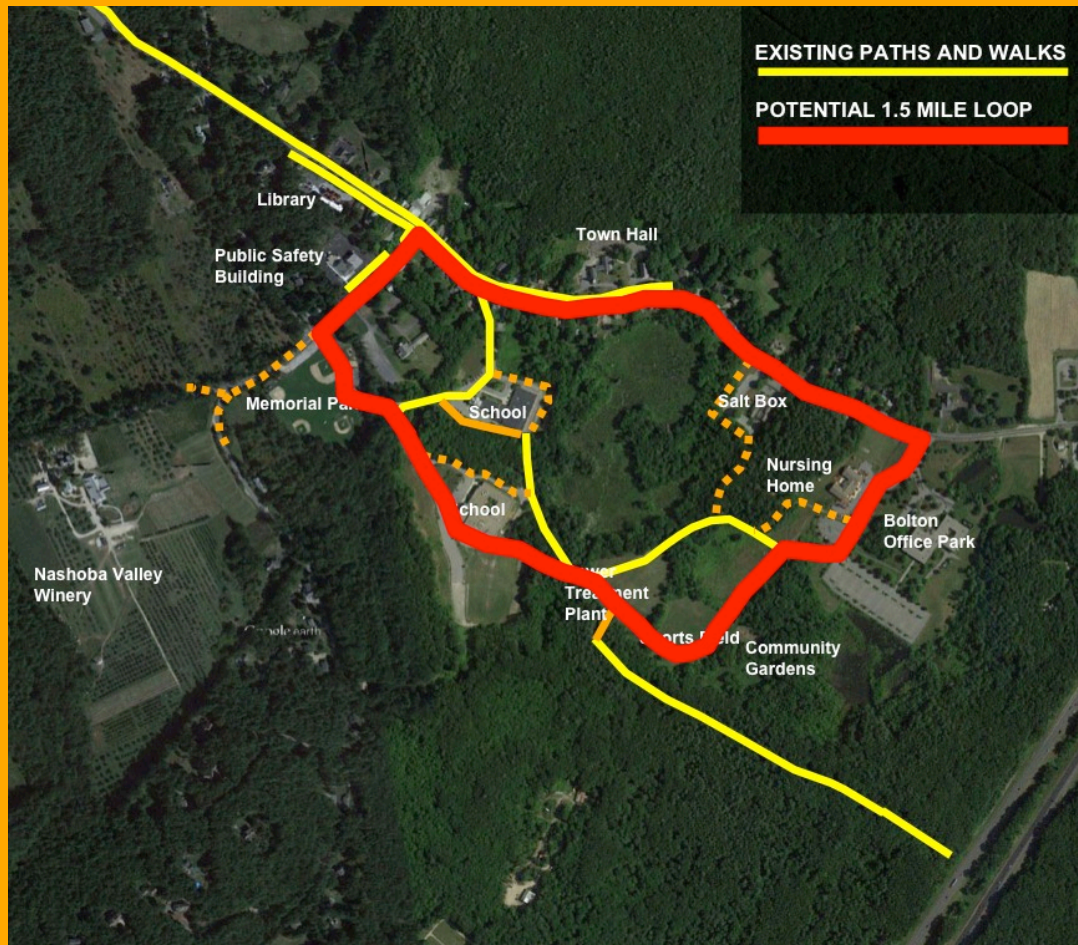
Mashpee is building walkways along every state highway and major local town road and along 2 small rivers

Creative use of town-owned land



Norwell connected schools and recreation sites on off-road town land using trails, boardwalks and existing lightly-trafficked rights-of-way

Creative location choices



Bolton is considering a central loop for walking, using only town-owned land.

Creative use of private sponsorships



Salisbury used local funding to buy right-of-way for a walkway

Their Adopt-a-Trail/Adopt-a-Bench programs enticed sponsorship of wayfinding signs and path-side furniture

Creative participation by private firms



Boxborough used mitigation funds from a private developer for a path, and persuaded a private utility to donate light fixtures

Creative use of preservation land



Hadley uses riverside fields and trails and its 1-mile long ancient common for walking

Connecting tourist locations



Bolton plans to add a roadside path to a local winery.

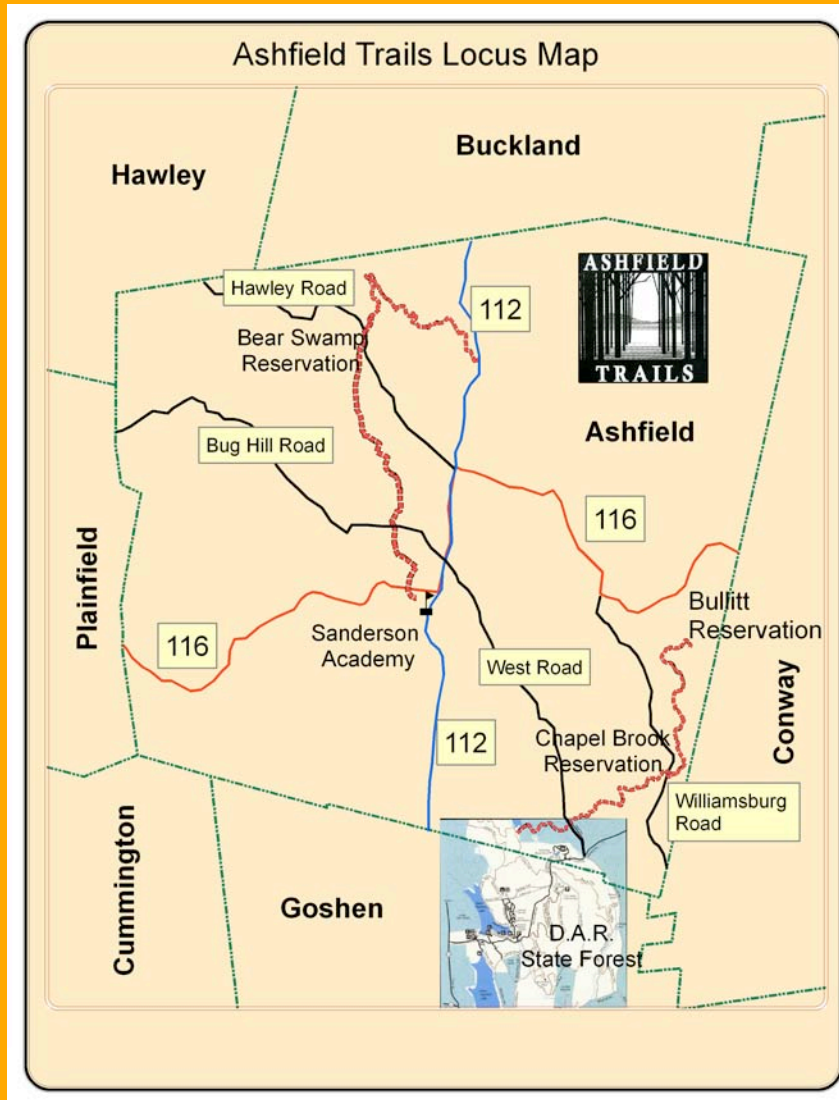
Lenox connected Tanglewood and a school to the town center

Building a network for walking



Amherst has 80+ miles of trails and 60 miles of sidewalks developed through town involvement

Building a network for walking



Ashfield's trail network is being developed by the private Ashfield Trails Association, working with private property owners

Long-term commitment



Lincoln became active in land preservation over 50 years ago

Lincoln's network now has over 70 miles of trails and 10 miles of roadside paths

Raising awareness to attract walkers

Welcome to Ashfield Trails Sanderson Academy to Bear Swamp Reservation trail. The trail is the result of a collaboration by Ashfield Trails, The Trustees of Reservations and the Franklin Land Trust.

Construction was made possible by a generous grant from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

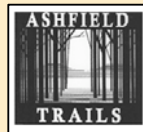


New boardwalk near Route 116

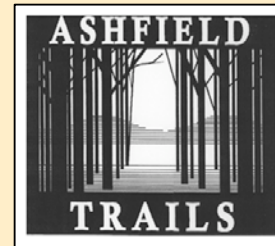
The trail is approximately three miles long and is of moderate difficulty. A round trip hike takes between 4 and 5 hours. Among the many historical, cultural and environmental features are old foundations, rock walls, ledges and meandering streams crossed by plank bridges.

Portions of this trail are on private property, and its use is a privilege. Please treat the land with respect and stay on marked trails. The following are not permitted: motorized vehicles, littering, camping, campfires, hunting, trapping, picking or removing plants, wildflowers, trees or other vegetation.

If you would like to volunteer or make a contribution to Ashfield Trails, please contact Phil Pless at philippless@verizon.net or at 413-628-3959.



(c)2009
Ashfield Trails, P.O. Box 194
Ashfield, MA 01330



Bear Swamp Reservation - Sanderson Academy Trail



Trail map and points of interest

- Maps & branding are key to raising awareness of walking
- Nearly all towns provide website info on walking

For more information

- More info at www.walkboston.org
- We can help you take action in your community
- We can connect you to professionals
- We can provide support materials



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