

Draft Merrimack Valley Active Transportation Plan

December 2014

Nearly every single community in the Merrimack Valley has either already begun improving their bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure or has plans to do so. These efforts and the need to coordinate regionally coupled with the Commonwealth's Healthy Transportation directive to triple the mode share of bicycling, walking and transit use triggered the need for the Merrimack Valley Active Transportation Plan.

MVPC Staff met with members of the public and/or staff of municipalities to discuss each community's vision, their needs and plans, and how that fits with regional goals. What we found out was people want a more robust and safer bicycle and pedestrian network.

Vision

The MVPC envisions that the Merrimack Valley region will be connected by safe, convenient and appealing Active Transportation corridors that people of diverse ages and abilities will choose to use.

Implementing the Plan will help increase bicycling and walking mode shares to promote environmental sustainability and healthier lifestyles while reducing automobile



Mayor's Health Task Force members celebrate the first Ciclovía in Lawrence. Photo: Groundwork Lawrence

dependence and improving air quality. We will connect jobs, housing, civic and recreation activities to strengthen our region's livability and economic vitality.

How will we achieve this?

Goal 1: Expand Multi-Modal Access and Options for all people. The plan calls for:

- All Merrimack Valley communities adopting and implementing complete streets policies that ensure that transportation corridors include all modes of travel in the future;
- Creating a more robust multi-modal system. The Plan includes 77 recommendations;
- Create a seamless system = make it easier to walk, bicycle or ride transit. The plan recommends more bicycle parking, easier and safer access to transit, and
- Ensure that our neediest communities are well served by a multi-modal system.

Goal 2: Provide a quality and safe transportation network. The plan calls for:

- Reducing the annual number of pedestrian and bicycle crashes and injuries through

coordinated efforts that include enforcement, education and environmental (infrastructure) changes. The MVMPO calls for more bikeability/walkability and road safety audits to identify solutions at known crash hot spots, and

- Maintaining the existing infrastructure in a state of good repair.

Goal 3: Support livable and economically vibrant communities by

- Creating a transportation network that supports healthy active living by

encouraging more communities to participate in Safe Routes to School programs and engaging broader coalitions in promoting active transportation modes;

- Directing transportation investments in smart growth areas and village centers to make it easier for people to live, work and play in these areas, and
- Fostering tourism through improving multi-modal access, improving wayfinding and finding creative solutions to make it easier for residents and visitors alike to enjoy all that the Merrimack Valley has to offer.

Non-Motorized Crashes by Community (2007-2011)

Community	2010 Population (Census)	Average annual 07-11 non- motorist crashes	Crashes/ 100000 pop	Total Crashes
Haverhill	60,879	60.4	99.21	302
Lawrence	76,377	51.4	67.30	257
Methuen	47,255	19.4	41.05	97
Newburyport	17,416	7	40.19	35
Amesbury	16,283	6	36.85	30
Salisbury	8,283	5	60.36	25
Andover	33,201	5	15.06	25
North Andover	28,352	2	7.05	10
Georgetown	8,183	1.6	19.55	8
Newbury	6,666	1.4	21.00	7
Rowley	5,856	0.8	13.66	4
Merrimac	6,338	0.8	12.62	4
West Newbury	4,235	0.6	14.17	3
Groveland	6,459	0.6	9.29	3
Boxford	7,965	0.4	5.02	2
* Data from Massachusetts Department of Transportation				

The Merrimack Valley Active Transportation Plan is now available for public comment through January 6, 2014. Copies of the plan are available at www.mvpc.org, at MVPC's office at 160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA or at the each Merrimack Valley community library. To talk about what you think are the priorities for active transportation in the region or for more information contact Betsy Goodrich at 978-374-0519 or bgoodrich@mvpc.org.

