

# CIRCULATION

Circulation refers to the means by which we travel. Whether by vehicle, by bicycle or on foot, the roads, sidewalks or trails within Franklin keep people and business moving. The purpose of the Circulation section of the Master Plan is to create goals and objectives that will diversify and better our transportation system. Its purpose is also to improve the capacity of our roadways, and develop and improve upon pedestrian and bicycle access and safety throughout Franklin.

## Roadways

### Roadway Classification

As of the Fiscal Year 2013, the Department of Public Works, reports that the Town of Franklin has 620 roads within its boundaries totaling 206.58 miles. These roadways are broken down into the following categories: 22.92 miles of private roadways; 18.81 miles of State roadways; 135.04 miles of Town accepted Roadways; 28.58 miles of Town unaccepted Roadways and 1.23 miles of Town under construction roadways.

The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) defines the functional classification of roadways based on the level of service each roadway type is intended to provide. This system of roadway classification is divided into three categories, arterials (generally connect cities and bordering states), collector roadways (connect arterial roads with local roadways) and local roadways (provide local trip access only).

Minor arterial roadways serve to link cities and towns and provide access to principal arterial roadways. Route 140 serves as a minor arterial roadway and runs east/west through Franklin



Route 140 serves as a minor arterial roadway and runs east/west through Franklin connecting the Town with the abutting communities of Bellingham and Wrentham. Photo by: Robert Wierling, Franklin Resident, 2012

connecting the Town with the abutting communities of Bellingham and Wrentham. Route 140 is also known as West Central Street from the intersection of Main Street until it reaches the border of Bellingham and called East Central Street from the border of Wrentham until it turns into West Central Street. This roadway provides access to Interstate-495 at exit 17 and allows for easy access to a multitude of residential areas and shopping centers.

Interstate-495, a principal arterial road, has 30 lane miles within Franklin’s borders. There are two exits within the Town, exit 16 King Street/ Woonsocket, and exit 17 Route 140 Bellingham/Franklin. According to the MassDOT, in 2008 the Traffic Counts on I-495 below Route 140 was 72,900, while above Route 140 there were 78,443 cars.<sup>20</sup>

There are over 130 lane miles of local roadways in Franklin. Local roads serve the purpose of moving vehicles within the Town only and connect to more major roadways (arterial and collector roadways) that can better distribute traffic throughout the community. Collector roads connect traffic from these local roadways to larger arterials.

### Subdivision Regulations

Franklin’s Subdivision Regulations, Chapter 300 serve the purpose of defining a wide variety of procedures for the layout and construction of ways in subdivisions. These regulations indicate requirements for construction of dead-end streets and cul-de-sacs as well as requirements for gravel base and pavement thickness.

### Width Requirements

The Town of Franklin Subdivision regulations define roadways in a similar manner to that of the MassDOT as described under Roadway Classification. Franklin is looking to reduce impervious coverage throughout the community and one way to accomplish this would be to narrow roadway requirements on Collector and Major Roadways. Table C-1: Width Requirements shows the current road width required in the Town of Franklin and suggested changes to the width to reduce impervious coverage.

**Table C-1: Width Requirements**

Classification	Right-of-Way Width (Feet)	Pavement Width (Feet)	Suggested Change to Pavement Width
Collector	56	32	28
Major	56	28	26
Minor	56	26	No Change

Source: Town of Franklin Subdivision Regulations §300-C. Streets, Width Requirements

### Street Acceptance

During the housing boom of the 1990’s, Franklin stopped accepting subdivision roads because Massachusetts General Law did not have provisions for granting street acceptance for roadways within subdivisions. For many years, the practice within Franklin for accepting roadways within a subdivision was for the Town Council to vote to approve a roadway acceptance plan, a layout plan, and obtain the title from the developer. This process however had its challenges, because in many cases, the developer of the subdivision was no longer in business, making obtaining a title for the roadway difficult, if not impossible. Some developers did not retain ownership of roadways, opting to give ownership (from the property line to the centerline of the street) to the home-owner. In this case, the Town often had to take the road by eminent domain from the home-owners; an expensive and time consuming process.

<sup>20</sup> Mass DOT Highway Division Traffic Counts: <http://www.mhd.state.ma.us/traffic.asp?f=2&C=RTE.I-495>

Recently, Franklin's Town Attorney drafted special legislation that was accepted by the Commonwealth to allow Franklin Town Council to hold a hearing and draft an acceptance plan for subdivision roads that are in the best interest of the Town to accept. This legislation has taken out the process of having to obtain a title from developers that may no longer be in business or who are reluctant to have the street accepted because of the cost they would incur to do so. Since this legislation has passed, Franklin has been able to accept roadways that have been left unaccepted since the housing boom of the 1990's. For subdivision approved by the Planning Board in the early 2000s, the Town of Franklin required developers to retain the rights to roadways in order to simplify the process of road acceptance, allowing the Town Council to immediately accept roadways once referred by the Planning Board for acceptance.

### Scenic Roadways

In June of 1997, The Town of Franklin adopted the Town's Scenic Road Bylaw (Chapter 170, Article IX, §170-50 through §170-55) for the purpose of protecting designated scenic roads; to maintain aesthetic qualities and preserve historical and environmental protection of designated roads in Franklin. Road work within a designated scenic road requires a Scenic Road Work Permit issued by the Planning Board. There are nine (9) designated scenic roads in Franklin which are listed in Table C-2: Designated Scenic Roads (see Map C-1: Street Map).

#### Table C-2: Designated Scenic Roads

**The Following are designated as scenic roads:**

- Daniels Street
- Forest Street
- Jordan Road
- Mount Street
- Partridge Street
- Prospect Street from Town line to Washington Street
- South Street
- Spring Street
- Upper Union Street from King Street to Wrentham Town line

Source: Town Code of the Town of Franklin, Massachusetts. Article IX Scenic Roads. §170-55. Designated Roads

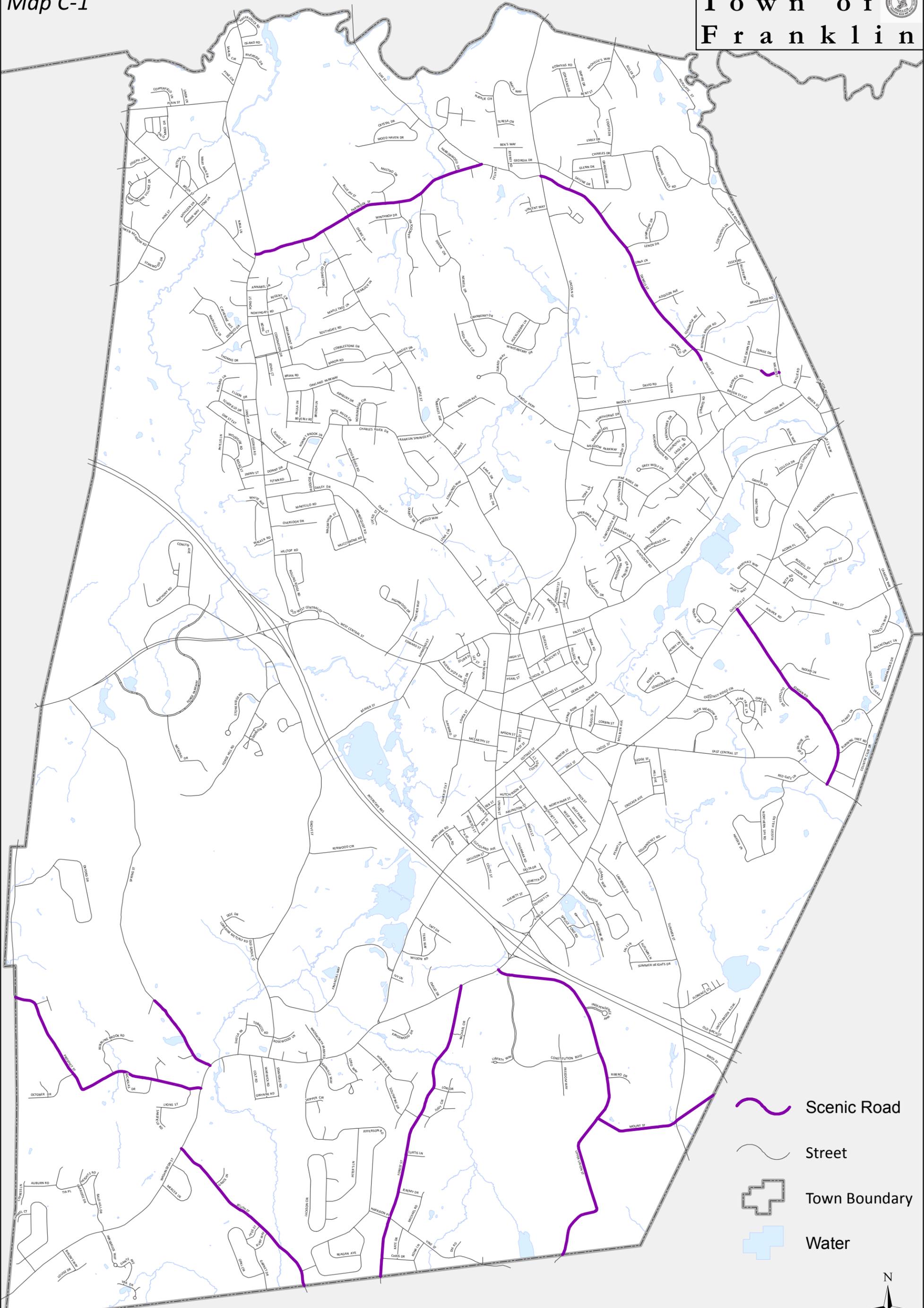


**Scenic Road: Upper Union Street.** Photo courtesy of DPW

# Street Map

Map C-1

Town of  
Franklin



-  Scenic Road
-  Street
-  Town Boundary
-  Water



## Roadway Repair

Each year the Town of Franklin utilizes Chapter 90 funds to complete an estimated \$500,000 on roadway repair. The Town of Franklin Pavement Management Program by Beta Group, Inc. is used to determine which roads are in most significant need of repair. On an ongoing basis, water and sewer lines are replaced and the roads and sidewalks are reconstructed. The following construction season, new water lines will be replaced along Anchorage Road and Sahlin Circle, at which point in time the roadways will be reconstructed and new sidewalks added. Funding for these repairs, \$1.2 million dollars, will come from a cash transfer from the water surplus. There are also future repairs planned for water mains along nine other streets which will result in their reconstruction and addition of sidewalks. Funds for these repairs will total over \$9.5 million, \$7.5 million which will come from a Water Works Bond.

### Town of Franklin Pavement Management Program by Beta Group, Inc.

**Table C-3: Pavement Management Program**

Repair Method	Length (Miles)
Defer Maintenance (Very Good)	29.21
Crack Seal (Good)	34.80
Surface Treatment (Fair)	44.33
Mill and Overlay (Poor)	45.12
Reclamation (Very Poor)	10.05
<b>Total Miles</b>	<b>163.50</b>

Source: Town of Franklin Pavement Management Program by Beta Group, Inc.

Franklin utilizes a Pavement Management Program regularly maintained by Beta Group, Inc. to reflect the current conditions of Franklin's 163.50 miles of accepted and unaccepted streets. Streets are evaluated and categorized by the type of maintenance that can be done to extend the life of the street, from deferring maintenance, when a road is in very good condition, to reclamation of a roadway when it is in very poor condition. Table C-3: Pavement Management Program is a summary of the condition of roadways in Franklin as of October of 2012. See Appendix C: Pavement Management Program.

### Pavement Management Initiative and Other DPW Upcoming Projects

The DPW's 2014 Pavement Management Initiative is a plan outlining a 5-year water and road improvement plan that reports roads in need of repair, the work to be done on each road, and how the repair of each road will be funded. DPW's goal is to maintain Franklin's roads at a "Road Rating" of 77 out of 100. Currently, there are 212 roads with a rating of 69 or less, and 134 roads with proposed waterline/roadwork.

In August 2013, the DPW presented to Town Council a list of water, highway, and sewer improvements, and other administration and engineering projects for 2013, as well as upcoming projects for 2014 and 2015. The Circulation related improvements from this presentation are listed below. The remaining projects are identified in Community Services and Facilities section of the Master Plan, under the heading, "Upcoming Projects."

During 2013 the DPW is working to reconstruct the roadways and sidewalks at Crescent Street Garfield Street, East Street, and West Street; reconstructing the roadway at Pyne Road and Island Road; and overlaying the road at Grove Street, Ledge Street.

For 2014, roadway improvements include: reconstructing the roadway and one sidewalk at Lincoln Street, Kathleen Drive, Fannie Way, Harbourwood Drive, Betten Court, and Corrine Road; and the Downtown Roadway and Streetscape Improvement Project (HPP project at Route 140 and Main Street).

The Administration and Engineering projects in 2014 include: phase one of the Lincoln Street Bridge project and the creation of a turning lane on Panther Way at East Central Street.

2015 Circulation related DPW projects include: reconstructing the roadway on Anthony Road, Conlyn Ave, Carmine Drive, Oak Street, Summer Street, and Lewis Street.

## ***Circulation and Connectivity***

### **Crash Data**

Below is a summary of accident and crash data as well as other important traffic studies that have been used to develop a list of areas that have the highest number of vehicle accidents and the largest volumes of traffic. The information below is a valuable tool for the Town to utilize when considering development proposals, intersection improvements or determining where pedestrian/roadway safety improvements should be made.

The Town of Franklin’s Police Department is responsible for maintaining crash data for the Town of Franklin. Reports generated by the Police Department contain information including the location of the accident, number of vehicles involved, injuries reported, condition of the roadway at the time of the accident and other necessary details to describe the accident scene.

Many of the accidents that occurred between 2007 and 2009 involved multiple vehicles and several occurred at intersections with high traffic counts. Franklin Village Drive, where the Franklin Village Mall is located had the highest number of accidents reported followed by 660 West Central Street, where the Mobile Gas Station is located. In 2009, 10 accidents were reported on I-495, including one fatality. Crash data from 2009 show that of the top 20 locations where the most accidents in Franklin occur, 35% occurred along a one mile stretch of West Central Street. Table C-4: Location of Highest Number of Vehicle Crashes 2012 shows the top 20 places that accidents occurred in 2010-2012.

**Table C-4: Location of Highest Number of Vehicle Crashes 2012**

Address	Year/ Number of Vehicle Crashes		
	2012	2011	2010
40 Franklin Village Drive	17	11	9
1000 Franklin Village Drive	16	19	22
221 East Central Street	12	7	9
100 Corporate Drive	11	9	16
466 King Street	11	13	13
600 King Street	11	4	5
1199 West Central Street	10	3	9
218 Oak Street	10	8	14
147 Pond Street	8	4	4
541 West Central Street	8	7	9
660 West Central Street	8	17	10
272 East Central Street	7	4	6
530 West Central Street	7	7	5
1376 West Central Street	6	2	3
198 East Central Street	6	9	2
200 Franklin Village Drive	6	6	7
365 West Central Street	6	6	7
4 Forge Parkway	6	4	2
441 West Central Street	6	-	-
527 Beaver Street	6	2	5

Source: Franklin Police Department Incident Address History Summary Years 2010-2012

There were six reported fatalities as a result of motor vehicle accidents between 2012 and 2008 (see Table C-5: Vehicle Fatalities 2012-2008). One fatality occurred at 160 East Central Street; the intersection where Walgreen’s is located. Another happened in front of the Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter Public School, at 12 Pleasant Street.

**Table C-5: Vehicle Fatalities 2012-2008**

Address	Date
310 Washington Street	September 15, 2012
67 Milliken Ave	October 12, 2012
160 East Central Street	April 20, 2009
I-495 North	August 11, 2009
12 Pleasant Street	December 11, 2008
881 Washington Street	February 29, 2008

Source: Town of Franklin Police Department Incident Address History Summary - 2012-2008

### **Traffic Studies, Level of Service and Other Related Studies**

When commercial properties are developed or significantly re-developed, an applicant is required to submit a traffic study to the Planning Board. These traffic studies are useful in determining the Level of Service (LOS) a roadway provides before and after the development is constructed. The LOS is a scale in which the length of delay experienced by a driver at an intersection is measured. The scale is based on levels A-F, with A being the least amount of waiting time (less than 10 seconds) and F being the longest wait (50 seconds for vehicles at un-signalized intersections and 80 at signalized intersections).

#### **Pond Street**

In September of 2010, Fuss & O’Neill completed a site assessment of the Town owned Pond Street property (Assessor’s Map 29, Lots 003 and 004) to identify potential development limitations and development issues that could occur upon redevelopment of the property. As part of this assessment, Fuss & O’Neill conducted a traffic study which included the intersection of Pond Street and Route 140 (West Central Street).

Study data revealed that the LOS at the Pond Street and Route 140 intersection is a LOS C. A LOS of C means that there are minimal restrictions on the speed in which drivers are able to move, however they may experience a few restrictions. At some points in time, a driver may find they may need to use some caution when changing lanes; minimal delays occur with a LOS C.

As stated above under Crash data, this intersection has been reported as having the highest number of vehicle crashes in 2012. At times, there is traffic congestion when queuing at the four-way signalized intersection backs up for those trying to go to the Franklin Village Mall.

In recent years, the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (DOT) completed a roadway improvement project along Route 140 that included the widening of the roadway with two-lanes in each direction from the east of Pond Street through the I-495 interchange to the west and continuing to Forge Park and signalization upgrades.

#### **Highway Bottlenecks**

The Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the region, entitled *Paths to a Sustainable Region*, was adopted by the MPO on September 22, 2011. The plan identified a number of severe bottlenecks on the region’s freeways and arterial roadways. These bottlenecks were identified via three methods: the speed index (the ratio of observed speed to posted speed limit); the volume-to-capacity ratio (a ratio of existing volumes to the roadway’s capacity); and the MPO’s Congestion Management

Process analysis. This list identified Rte. 140 between Wrentham and Franklin in Massachusetts' Southwest Corridor as severe bottleneck. The report indicated modernization projects or improvement of alternative modes or routes as ways of addressing the issue versus methods such as resurfacing and bridge reconstruction which are necessary for maintaining existing systems.

### Franklin Center Plan

The revitalization of Downtown Franklin has been a major priority for a number of years. In 2002 and 2003 the *Franklin Center Plan* was created to provide Town officials with a vision and basic strategy for revitalization of the Downtown area. The *Franklin Center Plan* was developed by the Cecil Group, Inc. utilizing a grant provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The Franklin Center Plan contained nine major conceptual improvement components, which were detailed in a poster format as shown in Figure C-1: Franklin Center Plan<sup>21</sup>.

Listed under each concept are proposed actions that could be taken to achieve the goal presented in each concept. Franklin has made steady progress implementing a variety of proposed improvement projects and strategies, resulting in consistent, incremental changes in the Downtown area.

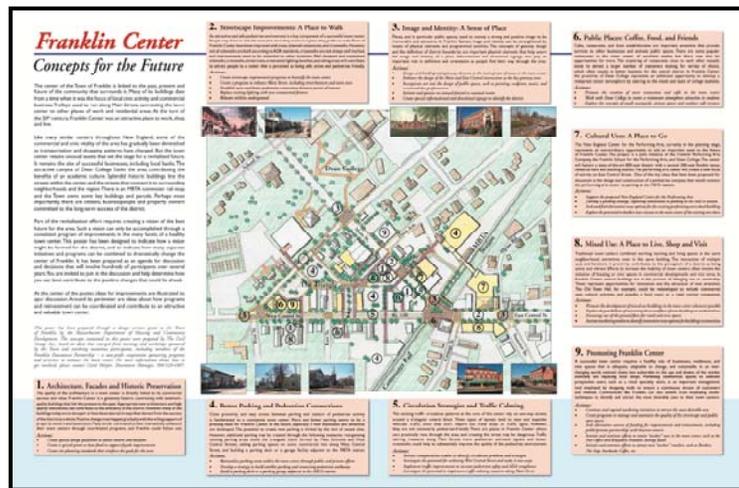


Figure C-1: Franklin Center Plan

While the Town has made progress toward the incremental revitalization of Downtown Franklin, through the implementation of the Franklin Center Plan, the real achievement of the plan was its hand in the development of the *Downtown Roadway and Streetscape Improvement Project*, as further detailed below. Several of the major project components outlined in the *Franklin Center Plan* relate directly to the Town's Downtown Improvement Project, including streetscape improvements, better parking and pedestrian connections, circulation strategies and traffic calming.

### 2006 Draft Traffic Study Downtown Franklin and Downtown Roadway and Streetscape Improvement Project

In 2006, Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. were retained by the Town to perform a Traffic Study to evaluate the impacts of roadway updates, specifically the altering of the one-way circulation around the triangle of West Central Street (Route 140), Main Street and Emmons Street.<sup>22</sup> The information presented in this Draft Report was then used to formulate the recommendations presented in the December, 2010 Functional Design Report for the Franklin Downtown Improvements Project.

The Downtown Roadway and Streetscape Improvement Project is a multi-year \$7.25 million roadway and streetscape improvement project. The project includes elimination of the one way traffic pattern of Route 140 in the Downtown area, installation of interconnected traffic signals with emergency preemption system, period streetlights, traffic calming devices, resetting curbs

<sup>21</sup> [http://franklinma.virtualtownhall.net/Pages/FranklinMA\\_Planning/initiatives/franklincenterplan.pdf](http://franklinma.virtualtownhall.net/Pages/FranklinMA_Planning/initiatives/franklincenterplan.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> Draft 2006 Traffic Study Downtown Franklin. Prepared by Weston & Sampson Engineers, Inc. August 2006

were needed, ADA compliant sidewalks, resurfacing of streets, and streetscape/landscape improvements and furniture. It is anticipated that this project will result in acceptable and reasonable LOS for not only traffic flow but will also improve the relationship between pedestrians and vehicular traffic.

The Town of Franklin has been awarded a \$1 million Public Works Economic Development (PWED) grant (State funding), and a \$5 million High Priority Project (HPP) grant (Federal funding); the HPP grant will be matched by roughly \$1.25 million in State and local funds.

The \$1 million PWED grant was used over the course of the fiscal 2011 and 2012 year to complete the resetting of curbs, installation of ADA compliant sidewalks and the resurfacing of streets along the following roadways:

- Emmons Street, between Main and Hillside Streets
- Dean Avenue, between Main and Ray Streets
- Depot Street between Main Street and Dean Avenue
- Ray Street, between Dean Avenue and Depot Street.

In addition a portion of the funds were used to improve the Depot Street Municipal parking lot to not only include all of the above mentioned improvements but also to include landscape improvements. Construction of the larger HPP funded project is expected to begin during the 2014 construction season.

### **2008 Town of Franklin Downtown Parking Assessment**

In 2008, Franklin's Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) conducted a parking assessment to identify actual and perceived problems related to parking in Downtown Franklin and to give Administration a better understanding of ways to deal with these issues. The study resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Striping of un-metered parking spaces on side streets within a block of Main and Central Streets could result in the creation of an additional 20 parking spaces.
2. Assure that on and off road metered and un-metered parking is a key component of the Downtown roadway and streetscape improvements design. This could result in an additional 30 striped parking spaces within one block of Central and Main Streets.
3. Repair or replace parking meters at the two Town owned public parking lots. Also, replace meters with a "pay-by-space" metering system to replace aging parking meter system.
4. Increase signage to Town owned parking areas.
5. Educate visitors in Town by providing resources to show parking spaces.
6. Consider use of the Town's permit spaces for business owners and employees to free up parking spaces in business' parking lots.
7. Draft new parking regulations for the CI District which currently has no parking regulations for new developments in the Downtown.

### **I-495 Transit Study**

In October of 2007, the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Central Transportation Planning Staff issued the I-495 Transit Study. The I-495 Transit Study was responsible for providing transit data for 11 communities located along I-495. Existing transit services were evaluated and recommendations for potential new transportation routes and alternatives for commuters were discussed. The study found that the following areas could be served by transit opportunities: Forge Park, Franklin's two MBTA stations, Franklin Village Mall, Tri-County Vocational Technical High School, Dean College, Downtown Franklin, Franklin High School and Financial Park on Washington Street. The study indicates that one way to reduce the number of people traveling separately between similar locations is by providing alternate

means of transportation such as by carpooling, vanpooling, or by use of park and ride lots. The information provided from this study has been and will continue to be utilized by the Town of Franklin to help expand transportation options within the community.

### **Critical Traffic Areas**

Based on the information provided above, it is easy to surmise that special consideration should be given when reviewing proposals for development in the following areas because of the high volume of traffic and accidents that have occurred there:

- West Central Street (Between 411 and 660 West Central Street);
- 100 Corporate Drive (location of BJ's Whole Sale Club);
- Pond Street and Route 140 (intersection where 1000 Franklin Village Drive is located, #2 place in Franklin in 2012 where accidents occurred and a LOS C wait time for traffic); and
- In and around the Downtown area (LOS F at East Central Street and Summer Street intersection).

Any increase in traffic in these locations may cause a further decline in the LOS in these areas and future mitigation may be needed to alleviate problems.

### **Public Transportation Systems**

Franklin residents have multiple options for transportation outside of driving. The Greater Attleboro Taunton Regional Transit Authority (GATRA) provides bus services throughout Town, there are two Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Stations providing train service to and from Boston and there is access to the MassRides program for commuters. All of these public transportation options are available to both residents of Franklin as well as those living within the region.

#### **GATRA**

Franklin's residents are able to utilize the Franklin Area Bus (FAB) service; a fixed route bus service that runs throughout Franklin. In addition to a fixed bus route service, GATRA also provides Dial-a-ride services and transportation for long distance medical appointments for Franklin's seniors. The service is part of GATRA and is funded in part by the Boston Region MPO Suburban Mobility Grant Program. Services run north and south through Franklin starting at 6:50 AM at the Jordan Road/ Family Medical Center and run a continuous loop until the Franklin Village Mall; the last stop along the route is at 5:55 PM. Even though this is a fixed route, those wishing to ride the bus may flag a driver to stop at any point along the bus route to be picked up for service. Riders pay \$1.00 for a one-way trip and elderly and disabled persons pay \$0.50. The FAB service runs on limited hours on Saturdays, providing service between 8:30 AM and 5:45 PM with special trips to the Bellingham Shops on Route 126. Table C-6: Number of Trips Provided (GATRA Fixed Bus Route) shows the number of passengers that utilized the fixed bus route service between the fiscal years of 2009 and 2010.

**Table C-6: Number of Trips Provided (GATRA Fixed Bus Route)**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Number of Passengers</b>
2009	8,524
2010	10,010
November 2010- January 2011	4,548

Source: Data provided by Joanne LaFerrara, GATRA

A recent survey completed by GATRA indicates that many who utilize the bus service would like to see expanded evening hours to accommodate work schedules. The survey also indicated

that riders primarily utilize the service for transportation to medical appointments. For those that rely on the alternative means of transportation to and from work, a limited schedule such as that provided by the FAB can greatly inhibit employment opportunities.

## **MBTA**

The Town has two MBTA stations, one at Forge Park and one in the Downtown that provide 16 inbound trips to Boston's South Station and 15 outbound trips from South Station. The cost of a ticket to ride the MBTA is \$8.75 one-way or \$17.50 round trip. If a person chooses to park at either of the MBTA stations, it will cost \$4.00.<sup>23</sup> The Conrail services a freight rail line through Franklin.

## **MassRides**

MassRides is a service offered by the Executive Office of Transportation. The service provides alternative travel choices as a way to save money and time while commuting for work. The program's customer service team provides regularly updated transit information for the community and will help determine the best transit option for those requesting services.

MassRides has an extensive data base to help match specific needs of commuters wishing to participate in vanpooling or carpooling services. The programs carpooling services will match participants with other people who live and work in the same area and commute at the same times of day. In addition, MassRides provides vanpooling services for those groups of persons who wish to share commuting expenses via a van which allows for more time relaxing or working rather than having to pay attention to a drive to work.

Both vanpooling and carpooling services provide a guaranteed ride home in case of an emergency. This service is provided for those who utilize alternative methods for commuting at least twice a week and is available up to four times a year.

The Town of Franklin is a participant in the MassRides Program, offering the service not only to Town employees but also to residents of the Town and employees within the Town. For more information on the MassRides Program, visit [www.commute.com](http://www.commute.com).

## ***Access to Transportation***

### **Handicap Service**

"The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requires that comparable paratransit service be available to persons who, because of a disability, are unable to use accessible, public fixed-route service." Service for disabled persons within Franklin is provided by GATRA through the Dial-A-Ride Program. Dial-A-Ride is curb to curb transportation for passengers who meet ADA requirements and/or are age sixty and above.<sup>24</sup> From January 1, 2010 through November 9, 2010 there were 9,764 individual trips by Franklin residents; there are presently 561 Franklin residents registered with Dial-a-ride.

### **Senior Transportation**

The Town of Franklin offers senior and handicap residents alternative transportation options via the GATRA fixed bus route service, by the Senior Center bus, via Dial-a-ride and by providing transportation for long distance medical trips. Both dial-a-ride service and the GATRA fixed bus route offers reduced rates for seniors using GATRA services.

In FY2010, the Franklin Senior Center provided transportation via the Senior Center bus to 289

---

<sup>23</sup> <<http://www.MBTA.com>>

<sup>24</sup> GATRA Bus Service. Dial-a-ride. <http://www.gatra.org/dar.html> accessed by B. Dahlstrom on January 11, 2011.

seniors for approximately 1,620 recreational trips.<sup>25</sup> Recent trips provided by the Senior Center include a visit to the LaSalette Shrine, Sturbridge Village, Museum of Russian Icons in Clinton, MA and other trips utilizing the Senior Center bus.

**Table C- 7: Number of Long Distance Medical Trips taken by Franklin Senior Residents**

Year	Number of Round Trips Provided
2008	66
2009	53
2010 (January-November)	64

Source: Data provided by Joanne LaFerrara, GATRA

Long Distance Medical Trips are available to Franklin's senior and disabled residents. This transportation option is used to schedule rides to medical appointments outside the GATRA fixed bus route and dial-a-ride bus service

routes. The number of Long Distance Medical Trips taken by Franklin Senior Residents is shown in Table C-7: Number of Long Distance Medical Trips taken by Franklin Senior Residents.

### **Alternative Transportation Trail Systems**

There are a multitude of trail systems that run through the Town Forest and State Forest, as well as many of the Town's recreation and conservation areas. These trail systems provide access for hikers, cyclists, walkers and even horse-back riders to enjoy a safe environment free of cars and motorized vehicles.

### **Franklin State Forest, Franklin Town Forest and Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT)**

Franklin State Forest is over 750-acres of land located off Forge Hill Road in Franklin. The Forest includes many miles of trails which are accessible to hikers, mountain bikers, and equestrians; a very limited area can be used by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). The southern portion of the State Forest trail system intersects the Southern New England Trunkline Trail near Grove Street, connecting the two trail systems. The Southern New England Trunkline Trail (SNETT) is a 22-mile trail that originates in Franklin near the Franklin State Forest and passes through Bellingham, Millville, Uxbridge, Blackstone, to the Douglas State Forest. The SNETT is an abandoned rail bed now owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation. There are portions of the SNETT that connect the State forest to the YMCA on the northern portion of the trail system near Forge Hill Road. Another valuable area that contains an extensive trail system is the Franklin Town Forest. The Franklin Town Forest is located on Summer Street and contains over 98 acres of land. The trail system at the Town Forest is not generally marked; however, there are many miles of trails available for hiking and passive recreation uses.

All of the above locations contain trails that are multi-purpose in that they can be used for walking, hiking, bicycling, as well as horseback riding, all forms of non-motorized transportation meant to bring a person from one location to another.

For further information on these locations, see the Open Space & Recreation Section of the Master Plan.

<sup>25</sup> Information provided by Karen Alves, Senior Center Director, Town of Franklin. November 5, 2010

## ***Bike Routes***

### **Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Six Urban Centers**

In February of 2010, the Central Transportation Planning Staff (CTPC) of the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization issued the report titled “Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements in Six Urban Centers. The report identified six communities, including Franklin, and detailed opportunities to improve pedestrian and bicycle access and safety and recommended measures that would both improve the condition of urban centers and highlight opportunities that could serve as a model for other communities.

The study area for Franklin included the “Downtown Triangle” or Emmons Street, West Central Street and Main Street, all of which are one-way going counterclockwise. The report details each intersection of the Downtown Triangle and makes recommendations such as crosswalk and sidewalk improvements as well as sidewalk updates that could improve pedestrian circulation. In addition, recommendations are made to develop bike lanes and bike parking areas to encourage bicycle use throughout the Downtown.

### **MAPC Bike Parking Program**



Fletcher Field, 2007

In November of 2008, Franklin was provided with up to \$7,770 in funds towards the reimbursement of the purchase cost of qualifying bike racks. This program was provided by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) through funding from the Boston Region MPO, the Executive Office of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration. Over \$6,100 worth of bike racks were purchased and placed at various municipal locations including, Downtown Franklin, many of Franklin recreation areas and playing fields, Franklin Public Schools and the Library. It was the goal of the Town to install these bike racks at highly utilized locations in order to encourage the use of bicycles and provide a safe and

secure location for the parking of bicycles for those who choose to utilize bicycles as a method of transportation.

## ***Pedestrian Friendly Routes***

### **Sidewalks**

According to the Boston Region’s Pedestrian Transportation Plan, published in 2010 by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, only about half of the region’s roadways and street networks have walkways, and few commuters walk to work.<sup>26</sup> These statements are true in Franklin as well. While the Town has completed numerous updates to sidewalks, there is still more to be done.

Plans for the redevelopment of Franklin’s Downtown include numerous pedestrian walkway improvements aimed at making the downtown more accessible and pedestrian friendly. The Boston Region’s Pedestrian Transportation Plan indicates that streets should include facilities for exclusive use by pedestrians, i.e. sidewalks, pathways etc. to separate pedestrians from the roadway, in addition to crosswalks at intersections, traffic calming devices, audible pedestrian

---

<sup>26</sup>The Boston Region’s Pedestrian Transportation Plan. Boston Metropolitan Planning Organization. Metropolitan Area Planning Council was the principle author. January 2010.

signals, curb extensions, bike lanes, and the reduction in the number and width of driveways when possible. Wherever possible, these concepts have been included in the Town's Downtown Redevelopment initiative which will help close gaps in pedestrian accessibility in the Downtown.

Currently, many sidewalks in the Downtown are narrow and in many areas not handicap accessible; many sidewalks are deteriorating while others are non-existent. Some sidewalks do not extend to the intersection and crosswalks are not present in appropriate locations. All of these issues make pedestrian access unsafe and discourage a walk-able downtown. It is anticipated that improvement to sidewalk conditions within Downtown Franklin will create a pedestrian friendly area, bringing more pedestrians into the Downtown.

Walking should also be encouraged for school aged children. Schools should be easily accessible to children's walking, which includes sidewalks that provide clear designation between the roadway and walkway as well as crosswalks that are clearly marked and signalized. Improvements are being planned along Lincoln Street to improve access to the school as the current roadway conditions are not conducive to walking.

According to the Department of Public Work's Snowplowing and Snow Removal Procedures, it's the Town's policy to plow sidewalks along central routes that are heavily traveled upon by children on their way to school.<sup>27</sup> This is done to ensure that safe pedestrian walkways are available to those who walk and utilize sidewalks as a means of traveling throughout major areas in Town. It is also Franklin's policy to remove snow in areas of the Downtown when areas become hazardous to ensure safe passages for pedestrians.

*WalkBoston:* In November of 2008, the Town of Franklin held a Walkable Community Workshop sponsored by the Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization. The workshop consisted of: a presentation on ways to improve walkability; a walk-through of the Downtown; and a follow-up discussion on ways to help make the area safer and more inviting for pedestrians.

The walk resulted in identification of areas that were missing sidewalks or areas that had significantly deteriorated sidewalks; locations where bike lanes would improve circulation for bike riders were marked on a map as well. Areas where bike lockers could be placed were noted. The information from this workshop was then used to help aid in the planning process for the Downtown Improvements project.

### **Safe Routes to School and Mass in Motion Grant**

The Mass in Motion Grant goes hand in hand with the Safe Routes to School Program as both encourage physical activity to improve wellness. Both programs stress the importance of finding alternative ways to incorporate exercise into daily life.

The Safe Routes to School Program promotes walking and biking as healthy alternatives for children and parents to travel to and from school. There are currently 347 programs/schools funded in Massachusetts, three of which are located in Franklin: Oak Street Elementary School; Horace Mann Middle School; and Benjamin Franklin Classical Charter School. The Safe Routes to School Program is designed to examine conditions around the three schools in Franklin and conduct projects and activities that will improve safety and accessibility, and reduce traffic and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.<sup>28</sup>

In January of 2009, The Commonwealth of Massachusetts launched the Mass in Motion Program to help prevent the prevalence of being overweight or obese and to reduce chronic

---

<sup>27</sup> Department of Public Works, Town of Franklin, Snowplowing and Snow Removal Procedures.

<sup>28</sup> National Center for Safe Routes to School. <<http://www.saferoutesinfo.org/index.cfm>> Accessed by Beth Dahlstrom, December 15, 2010

disease, with a particular focus on the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. The Town of Franklin became the 11<sup>th</sup> community in Massachusetts to receive a Mass in Motion Grant to make wellness initiatives a priority within schools, the workplace and within the community at-large.

## ***Areas of Focus***

### **Recent Circulation Improvement**

With the large increase in residential units and commercial and industrial facilities during the last 30 years, the Town, as well as the State, has needed to prioritize transportation improvements to arterials and major intersections.

### **State Transportation Improvements Project and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP)**

In order for the State to take on a road construction project of substantial size the project must first be on the TIP list, which is a list of transportation improvements produced annually by the Metropolitan Planning Organization. The list acts as the implementation arm of the MPO's long-range Transportation Plan by incrementally programming funding for improvements over a four-year period. It programs federal-aid funds for transit projects, and state and federal-aid funds for roadway projects.

Over the last couple decades, several Franklin area TIP projects related to Interstate 495 have been completed, including: geometric improvements to ramps at exit 17; resurfacing both northbound and southbound lanes; rehabilitation of the bridge over MBTA's rail line; and major improvements to the Exit 17 Interchange in conjunction with the relocation and widening of a 1.5 mile section of Route 140 near Forge Park.

More recently, MassDOT implemented a \$4.8+ million improvement project at I-495 and King Street, which included the widening and realignment of Upper Union Street at Constitution Boulevard. Additional I-495 bridge rehabilitation in Franklin and Bellingham is expected to begin soon.

Three other TIP projects were completed on Franklin owned roadways adjacent to the Rt. 140 and King Street projects mentioned above, which included reconstruction of Pond Street, Union Street, and much of King Street.

Franklin continues to support the inclusion of the reconstruction of Pleasant Street on the TIP. The Pleasant Street project involves the reconstruction of Pleasant Street beginning at the intersection of Union Street and Oak Street to the Norfolk Town line for approximately 2.2 miles. Work includes shoulder widening, new pavement, sidewalks, granite curbing, roadway drainage, a new traffic signal at the intersection of Pleasant Street and Chestnut Street, and upgrades to the traffic signals at Pleasant Street and Main Street as well as Pleasant Street at Union and Oak Streets. This project is important due to the fact that Pleasant Street is one of the few east-west roadways in Franklin leading to the Town Common.

## ***Journey to Work***

### **Commuter Statistics**

Quick access to Interstate-495 and close proximity to the Massachusetts Turnpike and Interstate-95 make it easy to see why 74% of those who live in Franklin commute outside of

Franklin for work<sup>29</sup> with the largest number, 13%, traveling to the City of Boston. 21% of commuters come to Franklin to work from a community within the State of Rhode Island, while nearly 22% of people commute from the neighboring communities of Bellingham, Blackstone, Medway, Milford, Norfolk and Wrentham.

Statistics such as the commuter data represented in this section show just how important it is that Franklin finds the resources to maintain and improve its roadways.

With 10.2% of the community traveling via collector roads, such as Route 140 to surrounding the Towns of Milford, Bellingham and Medway for work, (see Table ED-7: Top 10 Places Residents of Franklin Commute for Work, Economic Development Section) a deteriorated roadway would significantly impact a person's ability to safely travel the short distance needed to commute to and from work in a reasonable amount of time. Many have chosen Franklin to live because of its convenience and its quality, accessible roadways.

Equally as important is ensuring the approximately 12,907 persons who commute to Franklin for work are able to arrive in the community safely. 10% of persons commuting from Woonsocket, Rhode Island (see Table ED-8: Top Ten Residences of those that Commute to Franklin for Work, Economic Development), to Franklin are likely to arrive in Franklin via two of Franklin's most highly travelled roadways, King Street and Washington Street. King Street is a significant street in Franklin because of its intersection with Union Street and Washington Street and also providing the location of one of Franklin's exits to I-495.

With nearly 80% of Franklin's workers driving an automobile to work each day, the quality of Franklin's roadways is very important not only for simple day to day travel but also for the more far reaching goal of making certain Franklin's commuters can reach their destination in a safe, reasonable amount of time. U.S. Census data shows that 35.6% of Franklin commuters are traveling less than 20 minutes to work while 17.8% travel over an hour for employment.<sup>30</sup>

Whether a person is traveling a great distance or a short distance, you do not want the condition of a roadway to be a factor that will add to a person's commute. 20% of commuters are taking an alternative source of transportation other than a car to work; the Town will need to support roadway maintenance because quality, accessible roadways will continue to support successful trade and industry in Franklin.

## ***Goals & Objectives***

**Policy Statement:** Assure the safe and efficient movement of goods and people within the Town of Franklin, and across the regional transportation network, by providing a range of integrated transportation options.

**Goal 1:** Improve and maintain the Town's public roadway system to assure adequate service, maximize public safety, accommodate desirable growth, and serve existing and future land use patterns.

Objective 1.1: Improve transparency of process for how roadway improvements are prioritized.

Objective 1.2: Work to improve deteriorated roadway conditions throughout Franklin.

Objective 1.3: Work to improve key roadway intersections throughout Franklin.

Objective 1.4: Work towards improving residential subdivision roadways.

---

<sup>29</sup> Census 2000, "MCD/County to MCD/County Worker Flows Files," [Special Tabulations Series](http://www.census.gov/mp/www/spectab/specialtab.html), <<http://www.census.gov/mp/www/spectab/specialtab.html>>

<sup>30</sup> Table P31. Travel Time to Work for Workers 16 and over.

Objective 1.5: Identify and secure funding for improvement and maintenance of the Town's roadways and other circulation resources.

**Goal 2:** Make the Town increasingly more walk-able and bike-able by creating and maintaining safe interconnected pedestrian and bicycle routes between key destinations within Franklin, including residential areas, Downtown, employment centers, commuter rail stations, schools, parks and recreation facilities, and commercial areas.

Objective 2.1: Improve, expand and properly maintain the Town's sidewalks and other pedestrian resources (see also Objective 1.1).

Objective 2.2: Improve, expand and properly maintain the Town's bike lanes and related resources.

Objective 2.3: Develop a system of recreational and alternative transportation bikeways and trails.

**Goal 3:** Work to improve existing and develop new public transportation options for the Town's residents and visitors, as well as the business community and their employees.

Objective 3.1: Preserve, enhance and expand the existing transit service in town as needed.

Objective 3.2: Work with public transit providers to educate potential users about current services.

Objective 3.3: Promote the formation of a public/private shuttle service to move commuter rail passengers to and from major places of employment.

Objective 3.4: Promote development project site designs that provide accommodation for existing and future public transit or private shuttle services.

**Goal 4:** Promote commuter ridesharing options for Franklin residents, and employees of Franklin employers that live outside the community.

Objective 4.1: Support existing rideshare efforts and privately funded shuttles.

**Goal 5:** Improve vehicle and pedestrian circulation and availability of Parking in the Downtown area.

Objective 5.1: Continue to implement the Town's Franklin Center Plan, including implementation of strategies and improvements in the areas of circulation, traffic calming, streetscape improvements, parking, pedestrian connections, and encouragement of mixed use development.

Objective 5.2: Work towards increasing the number of public parking spaces in Downtown Franklin, delineating between the need for employee or long-term parking and customer or short-term parking.

Objective 5.3: Promote mixed-use development in appropriate areas. Please refer to Goal 2 and related objectives in the Land Use section of this document.

**Goal 6:** Support sustainable development, renewable energy and recycling initiatives, low impact development, and other "Green" activities.

- Objective 6.1: Encourage investment in green technologies as part of Town sponsored development or redevelopment projects.  
Please refer to Community Services & Facilities Goal 7, Objective 7.2.
- Objective 6.2: Maintain a balance between competing Town priorities, including reducing impervious surfaces, increasing rain water infiltration, increasing walking/biking options, and providing efficient roadway and intersection level of service.
- Objective 6.3: Explore sustainable development improvement strategies in the areas of circulation, traffic calming, streetscape improvements, parking, pedestrian and bicycle connections, and enhanced transit.