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Networks of Opportunity: A Citywide Vision for Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways in Chicopee, Massachusetts

Item Type	article;article
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Download date	2025-06-21 07:18:59
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/31985



Networks Of Opportunity: A Citywide Vision for Pedestrian and Bicycle Pathways in Chicopee, Massachusetts



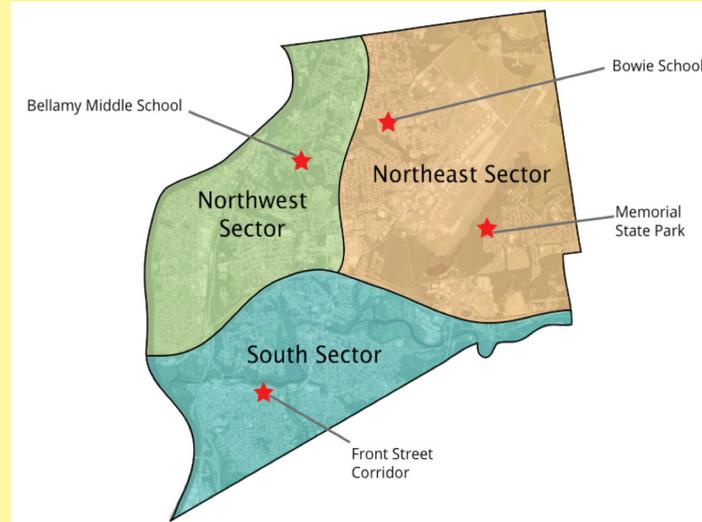
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BACKGROUND

Chicopee's topography attracted industries primarily related to farming and manufacturing. The city's plains, steep hills, limited areas of fertile soil, and location between the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers discouraged the city from growing out from a central core. Instead, the city formed itself into separate villages with distinct cultural and industrial identities. The City then became home to several large-scale factories and mills. Chicopee's fragmented sidewalk network and auto-centric culture have resulted in pedestrian and bicyclist access challenges to major local destinations that include schools, recreational facilities, commercial areas, services, and surrounding communities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Networks of Opportunity, Pacer Planning provides a vision plan for the City of Chicopee, Massachusetts that aims to increase local and regional connections between the City's assets for pedestrians and bicyclists. Additional goals of this project include increasing the number of users of pedestrian and bicycle paths within the City, proposing feasible options that will lead to safer walking paths to schools for school-age children living within non-bus service areas, and connecting these paths to existing and proposed green spaces throughout the community. Depending on the school, students living within the school's service area (1.5 to 2 miles), may not receive bus services. This project implemented a public engagement process to solicit input from both parents and key stakeholders that are active in the education community. Pacer Planning distributed an electronic survey, which received 106 respondents, as well as interviewed seven stakeholders. Our survey and interview responses informed our recommendations.



SECTORS AND DESTINATIONS

To present our proposed bicycle and pedestrian path network, Pacer Planning has divided Chicopee into three sectors: Northwest Chicopee, Northeast Chicopee, and South Chicopee. Each of these sectors contains one or more key destinations. The map to the right depicts these sectors and each of the corresponding sector map displays the proposed path network and key recommendations.

Citywide Recommendations

Policy	Design	Programming
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apply for Safe Routes to School Program Draft a Complete Streets policy Begin a formal bicycle and pedestrian plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement engaging bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, such as glow-in-the-dark bicycle paths to create excitement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join discussions on regional bike share program Work with <i>Walk [Your City]</i> Work with the <i>Better Block Foundation</i>

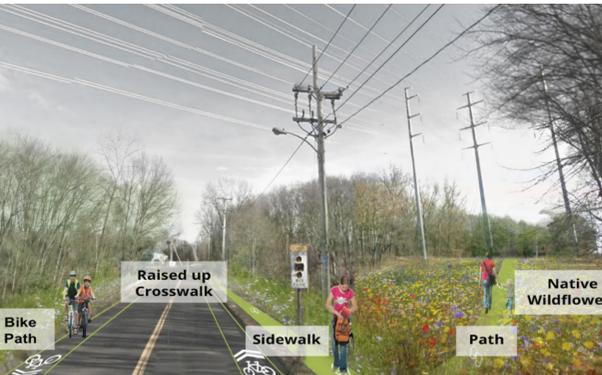
NORTHWEST SECTOR OF CHICOPEE



PENDLETON AVE (BEFORE)

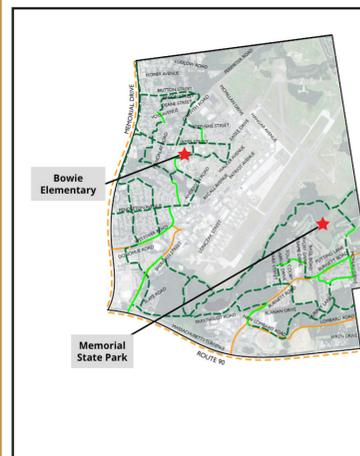


PENDLETON AVE (AFTER)

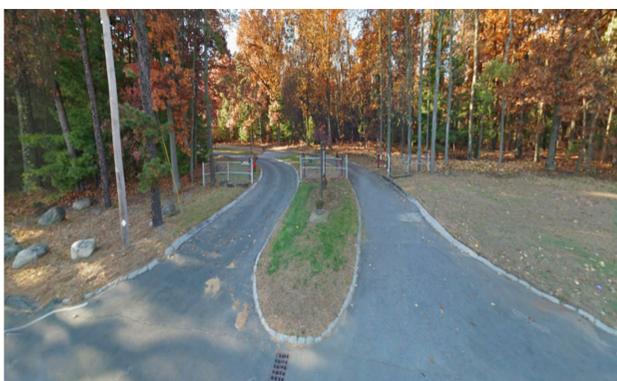


Highlighted Recommendation
Pendleton Avenue, the street where the Bellamy Middle School is located, contains a largely undeveloped utility corridor that could serve as a path for student walkers. Thus, Pacer Planning recommends that the City of Chicopee invest in this corridor to make it walkable and bikeable through the addition of a path and native wildflowers. In addition, we recommend the following improvements for Pendleton Avenue: bike paths, sidewalks, and raised crosswalks.

NORTHEAST SECTOR OF CHICOPEE



BURNETT ROAD (BEFORE)



BURNETT ROAD (AFTER)



Highlighted Recommendation
Currently, the main entrance to the Chicopee Memorial State Park on Burnett Road does not contain any sidewalks, making it inaccessible to pedestrians. Pacer Planning recommends that Chicopee (with assistance from MassDOT) improve the entrance to the Chicopee Memorial State Park to be more bicycle and pedestrian friendly through the addition of street trees, native grass, shrubs, a bicycle path, and signage.

SOUTH SECTOR OF CHICOPEE



FRONT ST (BEFORE)



FRONT ST (AFTER)



Highlighted Recommendation
Pacer Planning learned during our public engagement that the speed of traffic on Front Street, which is home to three schools, makes travel unsafe for student walkers. To make Front Street more walkable and bikeable, Pacer Planning recommends the City of Chicopee invest in bike paths, trees, signage, and native shrubs in this key corridor.

Acknowledgements: Pacer Planning wishes to thank the following individuals for their assistance: Lee Pouliot, Jack Benjamin, Michelle Santerre(City of Chicopee); Richard Fries (MassBike); the Chicopee Police Department; the Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning Department; and our instructors Dr. Darrel Ramsey-Musolf and Professor Robert Ryan

Poster Design By Tom Leary